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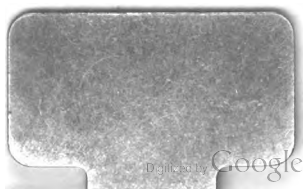




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SERMONS IN ROME

DURING

LENT 1838.

BY

THE REV. JOHN HAMILTON GRAY, M.A.

OF MAGDALEN COLLEGE, OXFORD,

VICAR OF BOLSOVER AND SCARCLIFF.

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DEDICATED BY PERMISSION
TO HIS MAJESTY
FREDERICK WILLIAM THE FOURTH,
KING OF PRUSSIA.

SIRE,

In dedicating this volume to Your Majesty, I wish to mark my veneration for a great and good King, and also my lively gratitude for much gracious condescension in times past.

That, when the grandeur of this world is buried in the dust, and the fame of earthly renown is forgotten, Your Majesty may inherit an everlasting crown, and shine, as one

DEDICATION.

of the truly wise, in the brightness of the
heavenly kingdom, is the fervent prayer of

Your Majesty's

Most devoted and faithful servant,

JOHN HAMILTON GRAY.

Bolsover Castle,

January, 1842.

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P R E F A C E.

IN the following Sermons, an attempt has been made to trace some of the principal facts of the christian religion, and to describe the present position and the future expectation of the church. In the first sermon, the divine Son, who was God before all worlds, assumes the human nature and descends upon the earth. In the second, the incarnate God is anointed, as our priest, to offer up the sacrifice of himself for our sins, and identifies himself with us, enduring all our temptations, and gaining for us the victory over them. In the third, this great High Priest and divine sharer of our nature, founds his church, which shall endure until he comes again. In the fourth, is shown the duty of a member

of that church, to serve and to glorify God. In the fifth, is described the awful punishment of those, who, by disobedience or neglect, incur the divine displeasure. In the sixth, the soul is followed to the separate state, where it is to await the resurrection of the body. And in the seventh, the return of Christ is considered, when the destinies of this earth shall be accomplished, and when the Christian, who has lived so long by faith and hope, shall be admitted by him to the full enjoyment of divine love.

From the circumstances of the land in which these sermons were preached, and the character of the congregation to whom they were addressed, it appeared necessary to keep constantly in view, the peculiar position of our Anglican branch of the church, and the especial duty which seems, by the providence of God, to have been assigned to her, of protesting against two dangerous classes of error; popery on the one hand, and puritanism on the other. And it seemed indispensable to impress a due sense of that position on a congregation, composed of the higher orders of my countrymen, sojourning in the capital of Romanism. It is by the assertion of ecclesiastical, as well as doctrinal truth, that we can

hope to guard ourselves, and to warn others, against the danger of being seduced by reasons and arguments, which cannot be easily answered by one, who is not fully aware of the privilege of being a member of that very outward and visible church, which was founded by the apostles. The Romanists are conscious of the strength of this position, and it has accordingly, been their endeavour, as much as possible, to avoid joining issue on this line of argument. In the continental countries which acknowledge the papal authority, the policy generally adopted, is to consider the Church of England as a branch of Lutheranism, or it may be, of Calvinism, differing in nothing from the Protestant communions of Germany or Geneva, except in wealth and in the honours of the state. And in the controversial works in the German and French languages, which are best known, a line of argument is rarely used, which applies to our position and to our claims.

And we must confess with shame, that at least, in later times, we ourselves have justified this omission, by our own oblivion of the apostolical claims of our branch of the church. Let any one examine the most distinguished works on the Romish contro-

versy in the English language, and he will be struck with the difference between those which belong to the beginning of the seventeenth century, and those which belong to the eighteenth and nineteenth. During the last hundred and fifty years, the advantages of our dominant, honoured, and opulent condition, had made us strangely forgetful of the origin of our existence, and the privileges of our vocation. And those zealous spirits, who, from time to time, were awakened from this lethargy of wealthy security, had their attention so exclusively fixed upon certain individual views of great doctrinal truths, that they rejected, as undeserving of notice, whatever had not a direct reference to these. Thus, between the contented occupiers of the broad and fertile domains of state patronage, and the zealous expounders of some deep mysteries and spiritual doctrines, the outward and visible church, as it was founded by our blessed Lord, planted by his apostles, and preached in the first ages of Christianity, was mainly lost sight of. And the Church of Rome had little occasion to direct against us, arguments, which our ancestors had indeed refuted, but which we, having forgotten, had never attempted to provoke.

Within the last few years, however, there

has been a marked change in our line of controversial argument, proceeding from the altered sentiments of a numerous and increasing body in the church. Deep and earnest minds, desirous of embracing the whole of God's truth, could not rest satisfied with the imperfect, and often mistaken, views, which constituted the fashionable theology of the more serious and strict ; while they must have regarded with even greater disapprobation, the dry, meagre, and confused elements, which constituted the religious instruction of another class, but which could not be considered as any approximation to theology at all. Hence the endeavour to revive within the church, that ancient spirit of catholic piety, which animated the holy men of primitive times, and of which we have, in other days, possessed some bright examples in our own communion, but which had become obscured and blighted in this irreverential and careless age of petulant inquiry and self-indulgence.

According to this more catholic spirit, the great truths of Christianity are received implicitly as high mysteries, which we may not seek fully to understand, while we must thankfully receive them, and believe them as the message of God ; the church is regarded as an

outward and visible institution of Christ, in which those only may lawfully rule, who are set apart by men who have received due authority from him. According to this more catholic spirit, the two sacraments which are generally necessary to salvation, are regarded as the great essential means of grace; baptism being the true laver of regeneration, and the supper of the Lord, containing in it Christ really present, though spiritually and in a mystery. According to this more catholic spirit, the voice of the church, as heard in the decrees of general councils, the writings of the ancient fathers, and the works of ecclesiastical historians, forming, together, a mass of traditionary evidence, is to be regarded as of immense importance in reconciling difficulties of scripture, and in explaining deep and mysterious doctrines. This spirit, be it observed, is one of marked contrast to the self-sufficiency, which would explain away every difficulty by its shallow reason, and bring down every high mystery to the level of its puny comprehension, and to be tested by its erring judgment.

It may well be supposed that the Romanists, who hitherto have found their security in the approximation of our views to those of conti-

mental Protestantism, have been alarmed at this unwelcome change in our line of thought and argument. They feel that they are now assailed on the ecclesiastical ground on which they had fancied themselves impreguably entrenched, and on which they might indeed feel secure, against any attack from an Erastian church or a Puritanical conventicle. But it may not be so easy for Romanists to find satisfactory arguments to meet those of their adversaries, on the ancient ground to which they have thus of late returned; and therefore, in the meantime, they have adopted the expedient of fomenting dissension in their enemies' camp. They pretend to hail their most dangerous opponents as secret friends, and while they tremble at the spirit which is thus so widely spreading, they affect to greet it with joy, as the first step towards a return to their communion; knowing well that such demonstrations from them, will give a colour to the enmity and jealousy of the old dominant religious parties in this country. For, during the last twenty years, secular carelessness and cold formality had been rapidly giving way to the zeal of Puritanism, or at least, had been gradually, and perhaps superficially learning its tone. And after years of

strife and enmity, these two parties were beginning to lead together a life of peace, on the footing of mutual compromise, the old church and state partizans adopting somewhat of Puritanical doctrine or language, and the Puritans, on the other hand, somewhat accommodating their practice, in order to suit their new allies. When suddenly, both parties were unpleasantly roused from the quiescent state into which they were gradually settling down, by the demand which has arisen on all sides, for a return to the old paths of churchmanship ; for the direct acknowledgment of an apostolical origin to our ministry, for the elevation of the sacraments to their due place in the christian system, and for proper respect to the voice of the church, as the interpreter of the word of God. These ancient truths appeared, from long disuse, to be so many novelties. And their supporters were met with little favour by the mere state establishment men and the Puritans, whose views they so signally confuted. And these have accordingly received, with alacrity, the impression which has been so industriously propagated by Papists, that such views must, as a necessary consequence, lead to Rome ; and that all who hold them are either already Romanists

in disguise, or at least, that their inquiries, if consistently followed out, must immediately bring them to the feet of the Pope.

We must sorrowfully admit that certain individuals, who have for a time, held these catholic views and preached catholic doctrines, have apostatized from our Church, and joined the communion of Rome. We will, moreover, unwillingly admit, that there may be reason to fear, lest others are ready to follow this evil example. But does it militate against the truth, that that truth is, by the weakness or perverseness of man, exaggerated into error? Is the doctrine of justification by faith in the Son of God untrue, because some men have, with frightful impiety, perverted it to Antinomianism? Was the Reformation in this country founded on error, because some, even many, who set out from it, ran into lamentable excess of licentious doctrine and want of discipline, than which even the errors of Rome, and the thraldom of Popery were scarcely more intolerable? Among the supporters of all systems, there will be found enthusiastic, visionary, narrow-minded men, men with one idea, and incapable of enlarged views, who are sure to exaggerate that which is right into that which is wrong, and to dis-

tort beauty into deformity. Such visionary men of slender judgment have existed before now, in the Church of England, among the so-called evangelical party, whose morbid consciences forbad a longer stay within our pale, and who accordingly, swelled the party-coloured ranks of Protestant schism. Such visionary men of slender judgment, have very lately existed in the Church of England, who, to the discomfiture of those who had followed their guidance in many a past doctrinal metamorphosis, have suddenly migrated to the communion of Rome.* There

* I have just perused the statement in which the Rev. R. W. Sibthorp has imparted to the public, the grounds which induced him to embrace the Romish schism ; and my previous expectation has been fulfilled, that his reasons, if they should ever be known, would turn out, not the most cogent that could have been adduced. In looking for the antitype of the external ritual of the Hebrews, his eye has been attracted by the elaborate ceremonial of the Romish worship ; and he has not considered that these things, if they are ever to have a literal fulfilment, will be fulfilled, not under the present dispensation, but under one that is to come ; when our great High-Priest returns from the sanctuary of the heavenly holy of holies, which now contains him, arrayed in robes of glory and of beauty. In his search after the antitype of the oneness of the Hebrew church, and the supremacy of the Jewish high-priest, his attention has rested on the vain boast of unity and universality, to which the Church of Rome lays claim, and on the usurping pretensions of her bishop. If he had for one moment cast his eye over a map, he would have seen that her claim to universality is contradicted by the existence of the Greek, the

is but too much reason to fear that others, with minds and judgments similarly consti-

Anglican, the Syrian, the Chaldæan, the Abyssinian, and the Swedish communions, whom it is easier to anathematize than to obliterate. And if he had devoted half an hour to the perusal of Mr. Palmer's chapter on Jansenism, in his late valuable work on the Church, he would have seen, collected within a few pages, the testimony of Romish writers to a distraction of views and a discord of creed, among the adherents of the Papacy, which extinguish all well-founded pretensions to unity of doctrine. Or he might have asked himself whether the question has ever been settled in the Romish Church, as to its own infallibility ; whether that is vested in the Pope, or in a general council, or in the Pope presiding over a general council ? As little as the Romish Church is the antitype of that of the Hebrews, is the Pope the antitype of the Jewish high-priest. That antitype is now in heavenly places, from whence, in his own good time, he will return to accomplish all which may remain yet to be literally fulfilled or outwardly developed. Pope struggling with Anti-Pope, and Pope cursing the memory of Pope, and infallibly refuting that which has been infallibly decreed, might have taught him to seek for antitypes elsewhere.

The claim of the Bishop of Rome to be supreme head of the Church, as successor of St. Peter, appears to have had considerable weight with him, though he evinces some misgivings as to the obscurity of his supremacy during several centuries. These he ingeniously tries to stifle, by arguing that as the christian church was then in a state of external depression, the power of the supreme head over it, was indiscernible. As well might we argue, that when a man had only five hundred pounds per annum, he could not be distinguished as master in his own house, but as soon as he succeeded to ten

tuted, are preparing to follow. And of such we can only say, they cannot follow too soon.

thousand pounds per annum, his position was easily ascertained ! Master is always master, and is known as such, whether it be in a farm-house or in a palace. Another argument, equally cogent with the rest, seems to have achieved the victory of the Papacy over his mind. Having perused Tract No. 90, he could not understand how he that wrote it, or those who subscribe to its views, can stop short of Romanism. We must allow the author of Tract No. 90 to settle this point with Mr. Sibthorp. However little we agree with certain positions in that Tract, we have always understood that it was written in order to afford an excuse to some wavering members of the Anglican Church, for abiding within her communion, instead of joining the Romish schism. However, we will own that Mr. Sibthorp's view of the matter is not an unnatural one ; though it does not account satisfactorily for his change ; as there was a still better alternative, that of rejecting certain passages in Tract No. 90, and remaining a member of the Church of England.

In the many doctrinal, and, it may be added, ecclesiastical metamorphoses of this pious, amiable, and accomplished man, he seems to have taken an erroneous position in each successive change. In his first conversion to Popery, to which he himself has alluded, he appears to have been actuated by no conviction, either in embracing it, or in withdrawing from it. As a popular preacher of the so-called evangelical school, he carried low-churchism to its utmost extreme, and, it is said, was even reprimanded by his bishop for breaches of ecclesiastical order. In embracing, as was supposed, more just and apostolical opinions, it was not long before he grieved the sounder portion of high-churchmen, by his love of excessive ceremonial, and his extraordinary attention to minute ob-

Their perversions of doctrine, and exaggerations of practice, have already brought discredit on true and sober catholicity, and have given a colour of credibility to the simulated fraternal embrace of Popery, and an air of justice to the angry jealousy of the Erastian and the Puritan. And when they leave us, let us hope that, if they return, knocking at our door for re-admission to our ministry, that door may never be opened to them. In the case of some of our clergy, who have on ultra-protestant grounds, left our communion, and have afterwards solicited for re-admission, a term of three years has been fixed as one of probation: but it would be infinitely better if no apostate, whether Ultra-Protestant or Papist, were ever again permitted to minister among us. To membership in our communion, we should thankfully and affectionately receive every erring and returning brother. But he, surely, is unfit to teach others, who does not know his own mind; and who is ever

servances, and things which in themselves signify but little. And now he has, on once more joining the Romish Communion, set forth as his actuating motive, reasons so futile, as to deprive his example of that authority, which his piety and accomplishments might otherwise have exercised over those who were accustomed to be influenced by his opinions.

learning, but is never able to attain unto the truth ; or if he has once found it, very soon after discards it for error.

We have been told, by one of the highest and most respected authorities of the Romish communion in this country, that many members of the Anglican Church deplore our separation from Rome as a sad evil, and that their willing, able, and zealous co-operation may be depended upon, towards bringing her into unity with the " Holy See." And were we to regard the opinions expressed by some individual clergymen, as the voice of an influential portion of our order, we might admit with sorrow, that the most palmy hopes of Popery were not unfounded. For we can discern in their writings, a general dissatisfaction at the system, and the position of the Church of England ; not so much a desire to have that system ameliorated, and that position rendered more catholic, as an undutiful spirit of revolt from the communion to which they owe the blessings and privileges of Christianity. We can discern in them, an impatience of our formularies, and a contempt for our most venerable authorities ; in fact, nothing short of a miserable feeling of solitariness and separation in their actual condition,

and a craving after a union with the Romish branch of the Church. That this anti-Anglican and pro-Romish tendency does exist among us, I unwillingly and sorrowfully admit; and without entering upon private opinions, or discussing the arguments of individual works, it is only necessary to peruse some of the articles in the more recent numbers of a distinguished theological periodical, in order to perceive the extreme looseness of the bond which attaches some of her nominal members to our church, and the powerful attraction which is leading them to the Romish schism.

But the Romanists deceive themselves, if they imagine that the number of those who are thus approximating to their communion is great, or that their character is influential. They have indeed been long and unjustly confounded with the men of really catholic principles, who, in these latter times, have arisen among us; because, to a certain point, their views have been the same with ours; and the haters of true catholicity have studiously classed together the true and the spurious Catholics, the *via media* of real Anglicanism, and the exaggeration of Crypto-Popery, in order to throw discredit on the

former. And for a time, the Romish tendencies were working as a secret leaven, not thoroughly developed, and in many cases undiscovered, by the sound churchmen, who admitted them to unsuspected fellowship. Hence, before the world, they have too long been suffered to pass muster together : and, as naturally happens, the more violent views have given a tone and colour to the whole, and have been regarded by the anti-catholics as the insignia of one party. It is also to be feared that this unfortunate identification before the public, may have in some cases, produced the reality of that concerning which the general accusation was false. Some inexperienced men of ardent temperament, perceiving no line of demarcation distinctly drawn, between the moderation of truth and the exaggeration of falsehood, may have rashly thrown themselves headlong into the latter, for want of due instruction in the elements of real catholicity. Accustomed to the dry and unsatisfactory reasoning of old nominal high-churchmanship, or to the imperfect expositions of the truth of God current among the Puritans, they eagerly embraced the views of primitive antiquity, when they were brought before them ; and, like many

of the Protestant communions at the Reformation, thinking that the most perfect truth which differed the most from their former errors, they advanced beyond the *via media*, and have been seduced from primitive antiquity, to listen to the sophistry of Romish innovation. But the errors of most of these have arisen from previous ignorance, and hasty adoption of exaggerated views of truth, or of error, assuming the venerable name of catholicity. And if, as is devoutly to be wished, a stand be made for primitive and apostolical truth, against the Romish bias which has seduced them, they may be expected to return, ere it be too late; and leave the few, the very few, we trust, among us, who are Popish at heart, to secede from our ranks, and join themselves to the confederacy, in which Rome, to use the forcible language of the fifteenth Number of the Tracts for the Times, has bound herself by a perpetual bond and covenant, to the cause of Antichrist.

We have been informed, by some of the highest Roman Catholic authorities, that many of us are expected to unite our earnest endeavours with theirs, to bring England into unity with the Romish Church and the churches of its obedience. But it seems to

me, on the contrary, that the time is come for every sound Anglican churchman most solemnly to declare that, as far as relates to himself, and to those who think like him, no expectation can be more unfounded, at least, until the Church of Rome ceases to adhere to errors, and to maintain pretensions, which oppose an insurmountable barrier to any such union. There are very many things which might and ought to be conceded for the sake of unity, and there are several points which might be mutually left as open questions. But there are, on the other hand, subjects of such vital moment, on which an Anglican and a Romanist never can be agreed, that until such concessions are made, as would cause Rome to cease to be Rome, it is vain to think of the possibility of union. There are three errors which may be specified, as belonging to the number of these insurmountable barriers : first, idolatry ; second, usurpation ; and third, schism.

It is with pain that I make so heavy an accusation against the Church of Rome, as is expressed in the first charge ; but it seems to me, to be impossible to vindicate her from the grievous error of enjoining idolatry in some cases, and of permitting it in others.

It is vain to attempt to repel the charge of enjoining idolatry ; by distinguishing between the worship that is paid to the Almighty, and that which is paid to the Blessed Virgin. In the formularies of the Church of Rome, prayers are addressed to her, which ascribe to her omnipotence ; thereby, giving to the creature, that adoration which is due only to the Creator. And though I know that the really enlightened members of that Church, conscientiously deny that departed saints are invoked, in any other sense, than as a christian friend upon earth may be entreated to assist us with his prayers in our behalf ; yet no one who is familiar with the superstitious observances which obscure the worship of the more ignorant Romanists, can deny that their adoration of the saints amounts to much more than this ; and that this crying abuse is permitted by individual priests, and is not prevented by the Church. The same may be said of the honour shown to images and relics. When used by a really enlightened Romanist, such memorials of piety, and records of the holy men of other days, may be incentives to devotional feeling ; but in the hands of the ignorant, both among clergy and laity, they degenerate into sources of the grossest abuse and the most miserable

superstition. Until this grievous sin be put away from the Romish branch of the Church, it is our duty to abstain from all communion with her ; and so far from desiring union, to obey with thankfulness, the injunction which saith, "Come out of her, come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." (Rev. xviii.)

It will also be time enough to desire a union with Rome, when the Bishop of Rome returns to the original position which he held in the Church of Christ. Whatever we may be disposed to think of the personal priority of St. Peter over his apostolic brethren, there is not the smallest reason to believe, that, in the earliest ages, any supremacy was conceded to the Bishop of Rome by the other Bishops. When Rome was the mistress of the world, the Bishops of the universal capital naturally possessed a very high rank, and great influence in the affairs of the Church ; and from their exalted position, they were looked up to by the Bishops of less favoured sees. And in later times, the very extinction of that imperial pre-eminence in their diocesan city, which had originally exalted them, contributed to confirm and strengthen their worldly

superiority. For the Bishops of Rome soon became the chief and supreme authority in their diocese, when the seat of temporal empire was removed; and that territorial sovereignty was speedily established, which gave strength and consistency to their usurping pretensions. But in the earliest and purest times, these pretensions were never acknowledged, nor could they be, for they were never advanced. And we of the Anglican church in particular, have little reason to admit them, as we are the ecclesiastical successors of those who obstinately resisted them. Let us make, to those who would persuade us to acknowledge the authority of the Bishop of Rome over the Church of our island, an answer, similar to that with which the ancient British clergy withstood the first Romish missionaries. We have our Primate of Canterbury, we may say, as they said of their's of Caerleon, to whom our allegiance is due; and what have we to do with the Bishop of Rome? We respect him as the chief pastor of a great and important see; but the moment that he attempts to assume a supremacy over us, we denounce him as a usurper.

The fact of our Church having, for several centuries, submitted to these usurping preten-

sions, does not invalidate the lawfulness of the great national movement which, at length, rejected them ; nor does it stamp with the impress of novelty, the Church's position, when she was, at last, delivered from this bondage, under which she had been so long enthralled. The Bishop of Rome had no more right to exercise authority over England, than the Archbishop of Canterbury has, over Italy ; for before St. Austin appeared in this country, a christian church existed here, under lawful governors, who denied obedience to the see of Rome ; for which resistance they suffered severe persecutions. And though it be denied that we derive our apostolical succession, through this ancient British church ; and though, on the contrary, there may be truth in the assertion, that it has been handed down to us, through Rome and the church of this country brought into communion with Rome, yet our spiritual independence is not thereby altered. For the conferring of orders gives no power or jurisdiction to him, by whom they are conferred, over him on whom they are conferred. A case in point is the connexion of the Anglican church with her daughters in Scotland and in America. The apostolicity of both of these communions is derived from us, and their

Bishops and clergy owe to us their ecclesiastical existence. And it is, doubtless, their duty to show to us, our rulers, and our Primate, respect and deference, in all things lawful. But we have no right to expect to be the rulers of their faith, or the controllers of their forms. Were important changes to be effected in our communion, there is no imperative reason why they too, should adopt them in theirs. And especially, were the changes in question to be, according to the judgment of the rulers of these churches, unwarrantable corruptions, then their duty would be, sorrowfully to protest against them, and manfully to resist them. And this supposed case is very much the actual relative position of the churches of Rome and England. For Rome is not now what she was, when Pope Gregory first sent forth the missionary Augustin, to bear the light of truth to the subjects of the heptarchy. In the earlier ages of her history, and even after corruption had spread far and wide, individual opinion was left in considerable freedom, and many of the most flagrant abuses of Romanism were courageously resisted; as is evident, from the conduct of some of the Spanish prelates at the council of Trent. But at that fatal council, Rome banded herself in

a perpetual covenant with Antichrist. The creed of Pope Pius and the catechism of Trent fixed, as a solemn profession of faith, much that had been hitherto controverted and questionable ; and by the novelties thus published in 1564, as the faith of Rome, our previous abjuration of her corrupt communion in the reign of Henry VIII., and our subsequent adherence to this abjuration, were fully justified, as acts of duty. Though we may once have derived our orders from Rome, we are not bound to Rome as slaves, during all future ages of the church; any more than Scotland and America are bound, in all things, to obey our decrees, as the rule of their faith and practice.

If we derive our orders through a church in communion with Rome, and if the orders of Rome are valid, ours must be equally so, and we have as good a right as they have, to the claim of apostolical succession. The Bishops and pastors of the Church of England now, are the rightful successors of those who went before them, to whom they have succeeded in place, but not in error, and who were indeed our predecessors in office, but not the rulers and standards of our faith. The Church of England has, in her Reformation, thrown off the

usurpation, and repudiated the corruptions of that of Rome ; but as she has broken no bond of communion, retaining substantially, the three great bonds of faith, worship, and government ; she cannot justly be charged with the sin of schism. Our secession from the communion of Rome was involuntary. We did not attempt a separation from her communion ; we only desired a reformation ; and then, as now, had certain errors and abuses been removed, and usurpation been made to cease, the Anglican and Romish branches of the church might have continued in brotherly friendship. But instead of acceding to the just demands of our church, our forefathers were menaced with confiscation and imprisonment, fire and death, if they refused to comply with corruptions and innovations. And therefore, we may with truth assert, that we did not run away, but were driven away from Rome.

But it is not enough to vindicate ourselves from the charge of schism, which has been so unjustly made against us. We may retort that charge upon the Church of Rome, and declare, that a union between her and us is rendered impossible, not only by her idolatry and her usurpation, but by the schismatical position in which she stands, as far, at least, as

regards this country; and which she must make up her mind to renounce, before she can expect the restoration of union between us. In order to explain my meaning, I must be permitted shortly to remind the reader of some familiar passages of English history.

In the reign of Henry VIII., an assembly was held, in which the Archbishops and Bishops, including those* who afterwards most violently opposed the Reformation, declared that the Bishop of Rome ought to have no jurisdiction in England, but that the Archbishops and Bishops of the national Church, had power to regulate their internal affairs, without the concurrence of the Pope. And for this, they alleged the authority of the council of Nice and other general councils.† In the year 1552, during the reign of Edward VI., the bishops and clergy, in convocation, made use of the liberty, which had been thus vindicated, by appointing articles of religion and a public liturgy, for the use of the Anglican Church. And from among the whole episcopal body, only five or six dissented from

* Bonner, Gardner, Heath, Voysey, Tunstall.

† The council of Ephesus is a striking case in point; by a decree of which, the Cyprian Church was delivered from the usurping pretensions of the patriarch of Antioch,

their brethren; and on account of their disorderly conduct and their disobedience of the laws, were justly deposed, their deposition being fully approved of, by the other Bishops, who immediately consecrated successors to fill their places. This settlement of the Church of England has, never since, been regularly altered by canonical authority, and the present Bishops are consequently the lawful heads of our branch of the Church; and all persons living within their charge, are bound to submit to them, and to those who, through them, are appointed by the Holy Ghost, to minister; otherwise they incur the sin of schism.

The only objection which may be made against this regular succession, is on account of the violent temporary interruption to it, which took place in the reign of Queen Mary. But, if we inquire into the facts, we shall find, that nothing that was done in her reign, can invalidate our succession, or destroy the regular settlement of the church in the reign of king Edward. For the synods which were held, and the ordinations which were made, in Mary's days, were not performed regularly by the Archbishops and Bishops of the province; but by the authority of the Bishop of Rome, and of those few Bishops who had been justly

deposed in the reign of king Edward, and who had thus no right to exercise jurisdiction within the kingdom.* And then commenced a cruel persecution, in which it was attempted to cut off the lawful succession, by death and banishment. But yet it pleased God so to order it, that the majority of the lawful Bishops, who had been in undisputed possession of their sees in the reign of king Edward, and who survived until the reign of Elizabeth, joined again, in continuing the succession of Bishops, and in restoring the Reformation, settled in convocation, which has continued uninterruptedly until the present day. The Bishops who were appointed by queen Mary, were schismatics and no lawful Bishops, because they came into the places of lawful Bishops,

* There was a striking difference between the deposition of the Bishops in the reign of king Edward and that in the reign of queen Mary. In the former case, certain prelates were deprived by their Metropolitan and episcopal brethren, for contumacy, and resisting the laws. While, in the latter case, the proceedings took place, in submission to the authority of an Italian Bishop, who had no right to any jurisdiction whatever, over the Church of England. The decree of the council of Ephesus, to which allusion has just been made, is a most valuable precedent for the unlawful nature of Italian usurpation over England, which was to be condemned, in like manner with the claims of the other boasted successor of St. Peter, the patriarch of Antioch, over the church of the island of Cyprus.

who were still alive ; or else they were subsequently consecrated by such schismatics. They usurped their places, by turning out the Metropolitans and the major part of the Bishops in each province, and thus they could have no legitimate authority.

These, having in this manner been irregularly intruded into sees, queen Elizabeth was accordingly bound to set them aside, and thereby to remove their violence and usurpation, and to restore the church, as it had existed in the reigns of Henry VIII., and Edward VI. At her accession, the only canonical Bishops were those, who had been consecrated during these two reigns, and who were now reduced in number, to eight. Of these, Bonner of London, and Thirlby of Ely, were incapacitated, as well from having been parties to the violent death of their primate, as from their obstinate adherence to the Romish schism, and the usurped authority of the Bishop of Rome, which had been renounced in the reign of Henry VIII., and which they themselves had abjured. Of the remaining six, Barlow of Bath and Wells, Scory of Chichester, Coverdale of Exeter, Kitchin of Llandaff, and the two suffragans Salisbury and Hodgkins of Thetford and Bedford, consented to the con-

secration of Archbishop Parker; and four of them, Barlow, Scory, Coverdale, and Hodgkins, were the actual consecrators, and thus continued the line of Anglican Bishops. Thus, the chain of succession was perfect, which perpetuated the apostolicity of the Church of England; and no other line could have been valid, as the fourteen Bishops, who were turned out of their sees by queen Elizabeth, were usurping and schismatical; having been intruded into the places of lawful Bishops then alive, or having been consecrated by such usurpers; and all acknowledging the authority of a foreign Bishop, wholly unconnected with the English branch of the church catholic. And it is perhaps worthy of notice, that Archbishop Parker and his brethren were, in very many instances, appointed to sees, of which the intruding and usurping Bishops of queen Mary's reign were not then alive. For it so happened that Cardinal Pole Archbishop of Canterbury, and nine or ten others of these prelates were dead, so that Parker and many of his colleagues were elected, confirmed, and consecrated to places indisputably vacant. And it seems to have been the express design of the providence of God, that the present Romish schism in this country should appear,

without question, to be a schism ; for there is not even the shadow of a contrary line of episcopal succession. So that the spiritual succession of Parker, and his consecrators, and his brethren, remains unrivalled ; the uncanonical intruders of Mary's reign, who were, by Elizabeth, rightly deprived of the sees into which they had been irregularly thrust, having admitted their own want of validity, and the unquestionable rights of the other party, by never pretending to perform consecrations after their deprivation ; and thus making no attempt to perpetuate schism in their line.*

For this, we have reason to be thankful ; as it renders the subsequent pretensions of the Church of Rome more barefaced, and her claims upon our allegiance more insolent and ridiculous. And thus the Church of England was settled under the spiritual rule of chief

* Though the following fact is not one that can be said to affect our argument, yet it is worthy of being noted, as a proof of the unanimity of the Church of England, in rejecting the foreign yoke of Rome, which the violence of queen Mary had imposed. Camden tells us that from among 9,400 individuals, who composed the clergy in the beginning of queen Elizabeth's reign, only 80 ministers of parishes, 60 prebendaries, 15 heads of colleges, 12 deans, 12 archdeacons, and 6 abbots, in all 175 ecclesiastics, were turned out. Thus above 9,200 declared in favour of the Reformation.

pastors, rightly consecrated by those who had a valid title, the remnant of the bishops, who had been appointed in the reigns of Henry VIII. and Edward VI.; for all those of queen Mary's reign were violent intruders, acknowledging a foreign supremacy, which the church had abjured. And the country at large, was so unanimously and thoroughly satisfied of the unlawfulness of the Bishops who were set aside, and of the validity of those who ordained Parker and his brethren, that even that portion of the nation, which formerly had been zealous for the Church of Rome, united with them, in all the public and private relations of clergy and laity, joining with them in sacraments and in prayer. So that for upwards of ten years, there was an universal agreement in the communion of the Church of England, which was interrupted by the Bishop of Rome's excommunication and deposition of the Queen, and his prohibition, under penalty of anathema, of all allegiance to her, and submission to the Anglican Bishops. This was the unhappy commencement of the Romish schism amongst us, which has ever since distracted the church and commonwealth of England; while we of the Church have continued to be governed by a series of chief pastors, accord-

ing to divine tradition and apostolical succession ; and there are none who pretend to any succession handed down in opposition to ours, or who can claim an orderly jurisdiction over us. For even if the original Bishops subject to the see of Rome had the vain show of a title, however usurped or pretended that title might be, they have died without succession. And the present Bishops, being guilty of no schism, their order being undoubted, and their succession being uninterrupted, possess an authority which is consequently unquestionable ; and those must be accounted schismatics in the sight of God and the Church, who do not submit to them, and acknowledge their jurisdiction.

In opposition to this lawful authority, the Bishop of Rome has sent a body of clergy, being, in process of time, a full developement of his ecclesiastical system, to claim the allegiance of the Anglican church. He has sent Bishops to rule, and priests and deacons to minister ; raising altar against altar, and anathematizing all who will not submit to his usurping pretensions. And thus he is guilty of the grievous sin of occasioning schism, into which those are deluded, who, forsaking the communion of our own branch of the Catholic

church, transfer their allegiance to another branch, with which they have no real connexion, and which possesses no claims on them. For, even supposing that idolatry was not stamped upon the Romish church, that the sacrament of the Lord's supper was not mutilated by her, and that she did not enjoin views entirely false, concerning the condition of the departed—even supposing that she were to meet us more than half way, in a reconciliation of the differences between us, we are not, on that account, to become unfaithful to our own branch of the Church, by seeking admission within her pale. To Rome, even if delivered from her most grievous errors, and cleansed from the corruptions which chiefly defile her, we are in no way, more bound, than we are to other branches of the church catholic, except by the associations of important historical events.* And these have been of so mixed a character, that the injuries which we have sustained, and the tyranny which we have endured from her, go far to cancel recollec-

* It was indeed Rome, and not the ancient British Church, that converted the Pagan Saxons. And England for several centuries regarded Rome as the centre of ecclesiastical unity. But this influence having been perverted to purposes of corruption and tyranny, its remembrance affords a very questionable title to our respect or regard.

tions of early amity, and might well excuse us for regarding her, on the whole, in the light of a usurping stepmother. To Rome, reformed from the corruptions against which we, for three centuries, have protested, we are no more called upon to tender our allegiance, than we are bound to conform to Jerusalem, Antioch, or Constantinople. We should, in the event of reformation, thankfully extend to her the right-hand of fellowship; but if the terms of union were to imply submission, they would be rejected, as utterly inconsistent with the relative situation of two equal branches of the Christian church.

The first step which Rome must take in the hope of union is, to withdraw from the false position of schism, which she has assumed in this country. Altar must cease to be erected against altar. A prelate holding orders in the Romish branch of the Catholic church, must no longer, assume the office of spiritual chief pastor, within the diocese of an Anglican Bishop. And the Roman Catholics must become Anglo Catholics, as they are Englishmen. Then, and not until then, may we discuss, on fair and equal terms, the great points of doctrine and of discipline which are at issue between us. But without this, as a prelimi-

nary or concomitant measure, the removal of idolatry, the restitution of the cup to the laity, and a liberty of rejecting the doctrines of transubstantiation and purgatory, would be in vain, with a view to restore intercommunion between us. Schism must be done away, and the terms of agreement must no longer be those of an Anglo-Catholic, separating himself from the jurisdiction of his native spiritual superior, the diocesan under whom Providence has placed him, and owning the allegiance of an Italian dignitary, who has no more right to supremacy here, than the Archbishop of Canterbury has, in Abyssinia or in Russia. The terms of agreement must be those of intercommunion of church with church, when Rome and England may live in mutual harmony, and in reciprocal acknowledgment, such as we now hold with the reformed episcopal churches in Scotland and America, such as we ought to hold with that of Sweden, and such as, if it please God, we may yet, one day, hold with the Greek and Eastern churches, reformed and purified. On no other terms, could we be parties to any union with Rome. And those among us who, unmindful of these considerations, do tender their allegiance to a great Italian dignitary, add to the errors of

practice and doctrine which he enjoins, and to which they must submit, the sin of schism, against which they have, during their whole lives, been in the practice of offering up their prayers.

I have ventured thus at some length, to express my views on this preliminary obstacle to the possibility of a union with the papacy, not because I consider the usurpation of the Romish Bishop and the schism of the Romish communion as the sole, or even principal, objection which should occur to an Anglo-catholic, when pressed to go over to Rome. But because they have been less generally dwelt upon, than have been most of the doctrinal and practical differences between us: and because they present a barrier at the very outset, which ought peculiarly to operate as a restraint upon those of our church, to whom the sin of schism has always been especially odious, and whose views of the episcopal jurisdiction and its apostolical authority, have been the most clear and definite.

Having thus considered the subject of union with the Papacy, and the sin of schism which such a step involves; we will now examine

another ground of the hope entertained by the Romish Church, that we are disposed to desert our own communion, and to join ourselves to hers. And this is the painful sense which we are said to have of our isolation. We are informed by the highest authorities of the Romish Church in this country, that among the numerous grievances connected with their position in the Church of England, of which some of our clergy complain, and which fill them with anxious longing for re-admission to the allegiance of the Pope, one of the principal is, the wretched feeling of isolation, which can alone be removed, by bringing our communion within the sphere of the "all-absorbing unity of the universal Church." Here is proposed a different method of accommodation with Rome, and one which might more plausibly enlist the sympathies of churchmen, than that which we have been already considering, and which, as we have seen, involves the sin of schism. And let us admit, although on Roman Catholic authority, that there may be some among us, who, even while they shrink from abandoning their native church, and becoming members of a foreign one schismatically existing in the midst of us, would yet gladly

lend the assistance of all their energies, to bring over that native Church bodily to the allegiance of this foreign one, and thus produce unity, not by the intercommunion of two independent branches on equal terms, but by the absorption of the one into the other.

And in prosecuting our inquiry as to the propriety and feasibility of this, we will dismiss from our consideration, the peculiar reasons which we have for protesting against Rome ; her errors of idolatry, usurpation, schism, purgatory, transubstantiation, and refusal of the perfect sacrament of the body and blood of Christ our Lord. We will simply inquire whether, even admitting the Romish branch of the Church Catholic to be as pure as the Anglican, there is any degree of catholicity or universality claimed for her, which we also do not possess? Or, on the other hand, whether the reproach of isolation which she applies to us, might not with equal, nay greater justice, be retorted upon herself? The Church of Rome would have a stronger case against us, if it could be proved, that in all ages, from the very commencement of Christianity, Romish and Christian were perfectly synonymous; that in no country had any communion ever existed except that of Rome ; and especially, that in

the island of Great Britain, from the moment of its supposed evangelizing by St. Paul, the successor of St. Peter had been recognized as supreme head of the Church : and moreover, if it could be demonstrated, that in the present day, we alone, of all the Christian world, asserting apostolical principles, lived apart from her communion. But we have only to consult the authentic writings of primitive times, we have only to open the volumes of contemporary authors, we have only, in short, to listen to the voice of antiquity, in order to be informed of the novelty of the pretensions of the Church of Rome to universality, and of the Romish see to infallibility.

We can trace the gradual ascent of the Romish Bishop, from the honourable position of one among many chief pastors of the primitive church, onward, through various stages of temporal eminence. We find him, at first, the respected head of the increasing and influential christian sect, as yet proscribed and persecuted, within the imperial city. We next trace his progress onward, as the venerated ruler within the capital, of the church, now legally acknowledged and established ; then, as the most powerful authority left in that city, when deserted by the monarch of the

world, and abandoned for a new seat of empire ; and then as a territorial sovereign, gradually adding to the pastoral staff, the sceptre of command ; and rising aloft on the ladder of power, amid the revolutions and convulsions of Italy, during the dark ages. Until, finally, the Pope, as we recognize him, in the persons of Hildebrand, or Innocent, stood forth sovereign of sovereigns, lord of lords, king of kings, his priestly mitre girt with the three-fold crown of earthly dominion, and his feet equally resting upon the necks of Emperors his temporal masters, and Bishops his spiritual brethren. Weapons spiritual and carnal were blended together, the powers of earth were enlisted on the side of pretensions to divine authority, and recourse was had to the artifices of imposture, in order to substantiate despotism and usurpation. In the early centuries of Christianity, the Bishops of Rome, from their influential position as metropolitans of the imperial city, as well as often from the weight of their personal character, were appealed to, as judges and arbiters of controversies, by the Bishops of sees remote from the seat of empire. When the imperial residence was changed to Constantinople, the Greek patriarch aspired to the eminence which his Roman brother had

so long enjoyed, and even ventured to assume new titles, and to claim a power hitherto unknown ; titles and powers, such as those which were afterwards claimed by the Pope. And for this, the Constantinopolitan Bishop was anathematized by the Roman, on the ground of his antichristian usurpation ; so little was there then, any notion of universality or infallibility. But temporal power, which gradually, more and more, gratified the ambition of the Roman patriarch, emboldened him to assume prerogatives which his predecessors had condemned : and at length, the Pope stood, fully developed as a great temporal monarch, and as the would-be spiritual autocrat of Christendom.

While in the East, the Greek, the Syrian, and other independent branches of the Church, refused to acknowledge this usurpation, our own predecessors in Britain made a solemn protest against it, in the same terms in which we may reply, in the present day, to a Romish missionary. We are subject to our Metropolitan, and the Bishop of Rome, though a great Italian prelate, has nothing to do with the direction of our branch of the Church. No historical fact is better authenticated than that, during many centuries, the Bishop of

Rome had no more power in the Church, than the Bishop of any other large and important diocese; until, after having his power increased, by his city becoming the seat of christian empire, it was consolidated by that empire being removed. Afterwards, territorial sovereignty came in aid of spiritual pretensions, and this formidable mixed authority was propped upon the testimony of forged decretals, and maintained by the presumptuous boast of power, over an ignorant and distracted world. But, for very many centuries, the Church in our island, as well as in the better half of Christendom, resisted these arrogant assumptions: and though the Romish superstition did at length find access into this country, by the instrumentality of the Pagan Saxons, the oriental branches of the Church, as well as the widely-extending Greek communion, have ever maintained their perfect independence, and jealously resisted all attempts to enslave them. It is true, that in Britain, the ancient Church was subverted by the arms of Pagan barbarians, and the influence of Romish missionaries. Yet, though her voice was stifled, it was never wholly extinct, and, in the sixteenth century, it was again raised, to denounce aggravated oppression, and to call for christian liberty.

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Thus, past history will not bear out Rome in her vain boast of universality; and if we regard the existing state of Christendom, we shall find it still more unfavourable to her pretensions. She sits enthroned indeed, in the Vatican, in solitary grandeur, exclaiming, I am sole, and entire, and universal, over all the world: besides me there is no one. And she would willingly forget that equal claims to the title of a Christian Church are possessed by the Greeks and the Anglicans, not to mention the Oriental and Swedish communions. The position of Rome, in respect to the other branches of the Church Catholic, is, as that of a man in a room full of company, who, in consequence of his intolerable arrogance, and the evil habits which he not only practises himself, but prescribes to all others as essential to good breeding, nay, to the very existence of social intercourse, has quarrelled with all the rest of the party. Finding himself in a minority, and that many are against him, he turns the tables upon them, and treats them henceforward as nonentities, assuming to himself the prerogatives of sole representative of the human race, and denying to them, not only the courtesies of society, but the very rights of humanity.

And if those proscribed and despised persons do make their voices to be heard, and compel a recognition of their existence, they are declared, by their haughty neighbour, to be in a state of isolation, unconnected with him, and therefore shut out from the commerce and sympathies of mankind. The Church of Rome reproaches the Church of England with isolation, and taunts her with her nationality, as confined to her own country. But we may boldly retort the reproach, and that with much better reason, and tell Rome that she is isolated, that, though not national, because her communion extends over many nations, yet she is sectarian, shut up within her own bounds, and having no intercommunion with branches of the Church ancient and apostolical as herself. What is isolation? Does it depend upon the size of the party said to be isolated? Is a giant, seated on a large chair in the middle of a room, entitled to reproach a man of moderate dimensions on a smaller chair by his side, with being isolated, because they are not seated together on the same sofa? May not the little man say, You are indeed bigger than I am, and you sit on a chair larger than mine, and you cover more space than I do: yet you are as much isolated as I am, and I am no

more isolated than you are. The communion of the Church of Rome is, in itself, larger than that of the Church of England ; but though composed of more numerous members, she is not less isolated than we are. Even as the giant, though consisting of larger proportions, would be but a vain boaster, if he accused the little man of sitting more alone than himself. Nay, what should we say of him, if he attempted to seize the diminutive chair, and was prepared, in case of resistance, to put to death its occupier ? Such is the reasonableness of the pretensions of the Romanists, and such is the conduct which they have pursued towards us. And the boast of their universality, and our isolation, is rendered the more ridiculous, by the existence of so many independent witnesses of the conflict, who are as little connected with Rome, nay, who are as hostile to her, as we are ; and who are doomed, by her, to the same state of isolation and nonentity. The Greeks, the Syrians, and the Swedes, no more pertain to Rome than we do, and yet they exist, and perpetuate their branches of the Catholic Church in uninterrupted succession, in spite of the anathemas of the Vatican.

But let us now inquire more particularly as to this, our so-called state of isolation, which is

apt to strike a person, who, without reflection, regards the position of an Anglican travelling or residing in a continental country in communion with Rome. Shut out from christian fellowship, and from the external consolations of his faith, he seems to be considered as unholy, incapable of any community of thought, feeling, or sympathy, with all around him, as soon as there is question of the most important interests of man. He is excluded from the use of the sacrament of our Lord's body and blood, and from all the other rites of our common religion ; and, after his death, the last home of the faithful is denied to his dishonoured remains, while the utmost stretch of charity can scarcely regard, as possible, the salvation of his soul. This our exclusion from all christian fellowship with those nations of Europe which are the most ancient, among the most polished, and with whom our intercourse is the most frequent, seems at first sight to imply a state of isolation, which, by our own choice, we have incurred, remaining voluntarily apart from the great, boasted centre of christian unity. But let us, on the other hand, take the instance of a foreign Romanist, who visits this country. Is not his isolation as great as that of the Anglican in Spain, or in Italy ? Is not he

AND SHE NOT FROM AN COMMUNITY OF thought, feeling and sentiment, with professing Christians around him? At least would he not be thus shut out, were it not for the existence amongst us of schism—of the Roman schism? He is shut out in that which a true Catholic, with sound ecclesiastical principles, would refuse to do: that is communion with schismatics, whether in an altar which is unlawfully raised against the real altar of the Church in this country, and be ministered unto by priests, whose ministry is a violation of all ecclesiastical order and discipline.

A parallel case would be that of a non-Romanist in Italy, supposing freedom of opinion to be conceded, and an Italian sect to arise independent of the Church of Rome, and excluded by doctrinal and practical differences of great importance, from her rites and her observances, but possessing the outward form of a church, derived, (supposing this to be admissible on ecclesiastical grounds,) through the Greek or the Anglican communions. Without stopping to inquire whether this might or might not be a justifiable schism, it would, at all events, be altar raised against altar, and ministry opposing ministry: and the non-Romanist traveller

would thus be encouraging schism. So false is the practical universality of Rome, in as far as this country is concerned. A Romanist here performs his acts of worship through the instrumentality of Bishops whose rightful sees are in Mesopotamia, it may be, or in Upper Egypt, and of priests ordained by them, who are in this country, lawless intruders, maintaining a state of revolt against the rightful authorities, and upholding the pretensions of an Italian prelate, wholly unconnected with this island, or with our branch of the Church. And the isolation of the Romanist in England, were it not for this communion of schism, would be a much stronger case against him, than is our isolation in a Popish land, for we are excluded from his communion, whereas he excludes himself from ours. An Anglican is banished from an intercommunion with Romanists, while there is nothing, in so far as we are concerned, to prevent a Romanist from observing all the rites of our common religion according to our forms; and, in fact, this is what was done by the whole Romanist body in England, during the first twelve years of the reign of Elizabeth. In the spirit of christian fellowship we held out to him the right hand of brotherhood in our rites and offices; while he turns from us as heathens and publi-

cans, and will have nothing in common with us. On which side then, it may be asked, is the isolation ?

We must not forget too, that, although at present, we may still be inferior in numbers to the branches of the Christian Church which are connected with the see of Rome, our communion is a vast and rapidly-increasing body. And if we calculate the number of Bishops of whom it consists, we shall see that they would make a highly respectable appearance in an œcumenical council, were such an assembly to be brought together. If we enumerate the Bishops of the Church of England and Ireland, and of the colonies, reckoning the additional ones that are forthwith to be consecrated for the West Indies and for Malta, and the Bishops of the Churches of Scotland, and of America, we shall find that they amount to eighty chief pastors of the Church of Christ; and these, not as were the Bishops of Numidia, thickly studded over a limited region, like rural deans; but presiding over widely-extended districts, and an immense population, and ruling the reformed Christian Church, from the furthest east to the most distant west, and from the frozen ocean to the shores of the Pacific.

But we turn to the future prospects of the

Anglican Church with much greater pleasure and thankfulness, than to her present position, or to the retrospect of her past history. For as nothing can or ought to be gained by refusing to confess our faults, we may acknowledge our past supineness, in the wealthy place and large room which we have enjoyed as the state establishment of this great country. We have for a century and a half, witnessed unmoved, the struggle of our daughter Church in Scotland with undeserved contempt and poverty, and we have beheld with indifference, the spiritual destitution of our immense colonial possessions. A sense of these, our sins of omission, has, it may be, come upon us gradually and late, yet, as we trust, in time to save us from the curse of barrenness. Already has the vast American continent responded to our maternal care, by the fruits of affectionate allegiance and eager intercommunion; and our once neglected colonies are now recalled, by the voice of lawful Bishops and pastors, from the darkness of heathenism, or the imperfections of Popery and Protestant schism. Let the condition of North America, the West Indies, India, and Australia, as they existed half a century ago, be compared with their actual state, and we must gratefully acknowledge the hand of God,

blessing with increase our endeavours to extend the full developement of his Church, wherever our influence is felt. And this success seems to have increased our zeal for the good work. The government of to-day would be ashamed to pursue that course of apathy, as to the spiritual wants of our distant possessions, which is a blot on the memory of former generations of rulers; and the Bishops who now preside over the interests of the Church, are much more alive, than were their predecessors, to their duty as successors of the apostles, in evangelizing the whole earth, and in planting the Christian Church with Anglican forms, wherever the power of England extends. It would be vain to seek for the adequate motive of this salutary change elsewhere, than in the important progress, which has of late years, been made by us, in a right understanding of our apostolical position, and of our duties, as members of a true branch of the Church. While we were satisfied with the enjoyment of the good and fat things of state endowment, we were barren and unfruitful in that which was our proper work; but a more full view of the divine origin of our ministry has brought with it a true appreciation of its highest duties. And of the number of these,

is, that of contending, not merely for the faith which was once delivered to the saints, but also for the forms which upheld the primitive Church.

But how could episcopal, apostolical England ever be forgetful of those high ecclesiastical truths and principles, which her very existence so loudly proclaimed? has been a question asked again and again, by continental Protestants, who were aware of the imperfection of their own system, and who regarded with desire, that superiority of ours, which they were prepared to find as admirable in practice as in theory. This question might be answered by a glance at the ecclesiastical history of England, during the last two centuries. The sound churchmanship and practical piety adorning the characters of Hooker, Hammond, Andrews, and Laud, gave place to the sectarian bigotry of Puritanism, which, though in time, obliged to yield to an ecclesiastical reaction, was at length followed up by the more permanent and deadly sway of latitudinarian Church and State principle, that commenced with our Revolution, and extended over the reigns of the three first Georges. Much that was individually great and good was produced in the Church during that period, which, in a

worldly estimate, is the most glorious of any in the annals of our country. But as a body, we were ecclesiastically, as well as spiritually, supine, nay dead. We were, it is true, occasionally disturbed by the hysterical throes of methodism, or annoyed by the sullen scowl of puritanism; but, wrapped up in the enjoyment of easy security, we cared not to look beyond the shores of our own happy isle, which contained a larger harvest field than we had energy to cultivate. And the ecclesiastical position, if we may call it such, which we contemplated with real complacency, was not so much that of successors of the Apostles and primitive Bishops and Presbyters, as that of powerful lords of parliament, respected magistrates, beneficent country gentlemen, clergymen, whose sympathies and efforts, as well as duties, were contracted within the bounds of our own shores. And in our thankfulness at having again escaped from the threatened thralldom of Rome, it may be, that we viewed with too little discrimination the imperfect state of the Scottish and German communions, and gave the right hand too freely to those who most essentially differed from us, on a fancied footing of common Protestantism, and on the common ground of national establishment.

Thus, our past indifference may be accounted for, by the circumstance of the good and great things of the state having generally fallen into the hands of men of worldly or latitudinarian views; while ascetic piety had retreated into the haunts of non-juring high churchmen, and strongly expressed religious feeling was met by the reproach of methodism. And our attention being more directed to the establishment than to the Church, we gradually began to confound them together, or to regard them as synonymous.

But that the Anglican Church is now penetrated with a sense of her highest interests, and with a desire to fulfil her most sacred duties, is proved by the energetic effort which she is now making, under the guidance of some of the most illustrious of her prelates, to extend everywhere, along with her commercial prosperity and political influence, the purity of her doctrine, and the full developement of her ecclesiastical system. And if England is only true to herself, and to the duty which she owes to Christianity, it is scarcely too much to predict that, ere long, her Church will be the world-embracing communion, which will compress and stifle Popery within her folds. We find that the doctrine and the discipline of England are

planted from pole to pole, and from the rising to the going down of the sun ; and this mighty work is the fruit of a few decades of years. If we may judge of future progress from the past, the Anglican Church will, ere long, be dominant over the vast continent of North America, from the gulph of Mexico to the frozen sea. In India, where England reigns supreme, we may expect that whenever its native millions are converted, they will receive our faith and our forms. Australia and the isles of the Pacific have been provided with a full developement of our system, which is also about to be extended to the regions of southern Africa. Thus, if we plant our Church along with our flag and our factories, and if our American daughter perseveres in her zealous co-operation with us, the Anglican doctrines and ritual must spread over the whole earth, to an extent that has hitherto been attained neither by the Greek nor the Romish branches of the Christian Church. The more delicate and difficult cases of Malta and Jerusalem, too, if conducted on a right principle, will supply the most providential means for the further developement of the Anglican Church, by placing her on a favourable footing, in connexion with other branches of the Church

Catholic; while, if they are followed out in a sectarian or uncatholic spirit, they will compromise us to our embarrassment, and it may be, to our great injury.

Nothing can be more reasonable than that in Malta, one of our own dependencies, situated in the centre of European intercourse, and inhabited and visited by increasing numbers of our countrymen, a clergyman of the highest order should be placed, to perform those functions to which a Bishop alone is competent, and to form a rallying point to the clergy and laity of the Anglican Church in the south of Europe. Such an establishment, if conducted on strict ecclesiastical principles, without compromise or rivalry, will place our church on vantage ground in the eyes of the Roman Catholics of those countries, who have hitherto known our communion only through the detached and desultory ministrations of travelling clergymen, who, on account of their distance, were almost emancipated from ecclesiastical control. But the chief pastor of the Anglicans must in no way clash with the local authorities. He must be Bishop of those of his own communion and his own country only; he must have no diocese in the strict sense of the word; he must in no way encroach on

the bounds of the constituted ecclesiastical powers. For, if altar is raised against altar, and Bishop against Bishop, we shall be, with regard to the south of Europe, in the same schismatical state in which the Church of Rome stands here: an episcopal representative of the Anglican Church assuming unlawful prerogatives in a foreign diocese, thereby placing us in a false and erring position, which can only lead to defeat and confusion. But as the danger is great, if the matter be not managed with strict ecclesiastical propriety; so are the good results manifold and important, which may be expected from judicious and prudent conduct. And the same may be said, in a still greater degree, of the recently established Anglican bishopric in Palestine.

It is, indeed, perhaps scarcely too much to say of the newly-constituted Jerusalem bishopric, that it may probably turn out to be the most important ecclesiastical event of our time. For its results will, in all likelihood, embrace at once, the Protestant communions of Europe and the ancient churches of the East. The pious mind of the illustrious monarch who has induced our church and government to undertake this measure, was impressed with its two-fold consequence, in procuring a

corporate importance for those in Palestine, who are neither Greeks, nor Romanists, nor members of the oriental churches, and placing them on a more respectable footing in the eyes both of the Turkish government, and of the Christians of other communions ; and also in affording the opportunity of embracing a purer faith, to the numbers of the race of Israel, who are in the habit of resorting to the scene of their ancient national grandeur. But setting aside these two important objects, let us consider the establishment of a bishopric in Jerusalem (not *of* Jerusalem, as the reasons which have been adduced concerning Malta will have weight here also) in connexion with its probable consequences to the Eastern churches and to Protestant Europe.

While the name and arms of England have been so long renowned along the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, all that the Oriental Christians have known of our church has been from the individual, sometimes conflicting, and not always judicious, representatives, whom we, in common with various Protestant sects, have sent forth into the East. And from what has been reported of the proceedings of some of them, it would be difficult for the Orientals to derive from thence, any satisfactory idea of our

unity, or of our systematic regard for the principles of Catholicity. Various communions, differing essentially from one another, have been confounded together by the Greeks and Syrians, and have, accordingly, impressed them with an unfavourable idea of our ecclesiastical condition. But now, that a clergyman of the highest order is entrusted by our church with authority, and is furnished by our metropolitan with full powers to treat in the name of the Church with Churches, we may hope that a better understanding of our constitution, ritual, and doctrines may ensue, and that a due distinction may henceforth be made, between those who minister with apostolical authority, and those who are self-appointed, or at least imperfectly sent. If a favourable impression is to be produced upon the Eastern churches, it must be by the unflinching maintenance of church principles, and by due respect being paid to their lawful authorities; and any attempt to set these at naught, or to slight them, must, as it ought, lead to signal failure. But our measures will now be directed by one authority, our missionary exertions will now revolve round a common centre, who is an ecclesiastic holding an office calculated to inspire reverence, and in whom are vested the

full powers of the Anglican Church. And as we shall now be collectively compromised by every act of the new Bishop, in a way that we could not be by the acts of former missionaries, we have reason earnestly to pray that prudence, judgment, and discretion, with sound church principles, may be given him, to guide him along the difficult and perplexing path on which he has been sent forth. And for all requisite fitness on his part, we possess the guarantee of the sanction and approbation of the two distinguished and venerated prelates who fill the highest and most influential places in our Church.

As we are alive to the danger which would ensue from any dereliction of ecclesiastical principle, or forgetfulness of extreme delicacy and prudence, in our relations with the Eastern churches, we are justified in anticipating immense advantages from a continued good understanding. The Eastern Christians regard us as the first of nations, and will readily listen to instruction from us, if we will not shock their feelings or disturb their allegiance to ancient institutions. And our duty is, while we establish relations of amity with them, to lead them to reject error, and to purify practice, without employing severity,

which would deter, or unnecessarily expressing censure, which would perplex. Thus we may gradually establish intercommunion with these ancient churches; thereby enlarging the sphere of our christian fellowship, and strengthening both ourselves and the apostolical communions of the East, against Romish usurpation: and consequently, more and more repudiating and throwing back upon Rome, her favourite charge of isolation. Not that, in making common cause against Rome, we would identify ourselves with communions which have anciently departed from the right faith, on points which Rome holds sacred in common with ourselves; or that we would regard such departure as a light matter. But while a more catholic fellowship will be produced between us and the orthodox Orientals, we may hope to be blessed by God, as the instruments in his hands, of bringing the truth more clearly before the eyes of those branches of the Church who have so long been in heresy, the Monophysites and Nestorians; and leading them to renounce those doctrinal errors, which, it may be, have been transmitted to them, rather as relics of antiquity, and as dead letters of their creed, than as actively working or influencing principles.

But, it has been asked with deep anxiety, is there nothing in the circumstances of the establishment of the Jerusalem bishopric calculated to nullify these expected benefits? Is there not, in the very essence of the scheme, such an identification of the Anglican Church with the German communions, as to stamp them as sister developements of one common Protestantism? Is there not something in the close and intimate union between a church which claims apostolicity on the same grounds with the churches of Greece and Rome, and one in which some very essential principles are in abeyance, which will produce a most unfavourable impression on the minds of the ecclesiastical authorities in the East? Before we vindicate our Church, as we trust to be enabled to do, from this charge, let us, in passing, do justice to the foreign communion, with which we rejoice to feel ourselves united in so good and righteous a cause, and that without any compromise of our own principles. What is the Church of Prussia? We do not pretend to say that it is ecclesiastically perfect. On the contrary, it is deficient in that which essentially belonged to every christian communion during the first fifteen centuries. And this, those of the Prussians who are catholic in

spirit, are the first to admit. But they maintain, with justice, that this imperfection was at first occasioned by the pressure of circumstances and not by free-will, and that the same causes have, more or less, ever since, prevented the application of a remedy. It is a false view of the matter to assert that German Protestantism* is a communion that was founded by Luther. We should rather say that it was provisionally arranged by him. Episcopacy was not abolished; it fell into abeyance. There was no hostility to the order; while, on the other hand, those of that order were most unfortunately hostile to the Reformation. And thus, circumstances rendered it necessary to choose between an adherence to doctrinal and practical corruptions in religion, and a violent departure, for the time, from established ecclesiastical order. There was no intention, on the part of Luther and his more moderate coadjutors, to put down the episcopal order. They felt themselves to be under the necessity, for the sake of what they believed to be the truth, to act with insubordination to the highest ecclesias-

* Here I speak more especially of Lutheranism, as that form of Christianity, rather than Calvinism, may be considered the national religion of Germany, and is more proper to, and characteristic of, the Germans.

tical authorities. But this departure from order was designed to be temporary and provisional. That this irregularity has not long since been remedied, is an additional proof of the difficulty, in all cases, of returning, after an aberration, to the right and straight path. And that which is difficult to an individual, is infinitely more so to a state, where so many impediments of jarring political interests conspire to embarrass every movement; and above all, to a state circumstanced like the Electorate of Brandenburg and kingdom of Prussia, forming one of a vast confederated body, and in every important national movement, being necessarily more or less constrained by external influences. Thus the imperfection of form in the national church of Prussia is a very different thing from the imperfection of form in our English dissenting bodies, or in the Scottish establishment. To apply the words of one of the following Sermons, the former "seems, in the first instance, to have acted under the pressure of necessity, and to have been prevented afterwards, by insurmountable political obstacles, from retracing its steps;" while the two latter "have gloried in their isolation and novelty, and have, from generation to generation, resisted the call to

join the Church, branding its principles and rites with the most opprobrious epithets.”*

And if a sense of justice calls us to take this view of the ecclesiastical position of our German ally, we have even less difficulty in regarding with complacency her state as concerns doctrine. Here we must dismiss from our view the rationalistic and neological tendencies by which continental Protestantism has become too generally poisoned, and which Prussia has by no means escaped ; but against which there is now, thanks be to God, a powerful reaction, both among her clergy and laity. We will consider her doctrine according to her standards, and not according to the corrupt teaching of individuals in her communion. And here we shall find her to be catholic and true, in a degree which we may seek in vain among our English sectarians, or the Presbyterians of Scotland. Indeed, it is scarcely too much to say, that, on many essential points, the doctrines of the Church of Prussia are even more in accordance with those of the Church of England, than are the doctrines of some of our own clergy. In comparing the views of the Churches of England and Prussia on the subject of the sacraments,

* Sermon III. page 145.

there is no occasion to attempt to prove entire identity concerning that of the Lord's Supper. Our Articles declare that "to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same, the bread is a partaking of the body of Christ, &c. &c.," and "that the wicked and the void of lively faith are in no wise partakers of Christ." Whereas the doctrine of Consubstantiation, in so far as it may still be strictly maintained, seems to imply the real presence of Christ to all communicants. Yet, whatever may be the degree of this difference, it is trivial, when compared with the immense distance which divides a reverential believer in the real presence of the Lord in the Eucharist, from one who seeks therein, merely a marked expression of Christian conformity, and a thankful remembrance of our Saviour's love. And it is to be feared that there are amongst ourselves, some who subscribe only to this low, inadequate, and unworthy view. The Church of Prussia, then, holds the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, that of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and that of the power of the church to absolve. The Augsburg Confession teaches that baptism is necessary to salvation, and that the grace of God is thereby conferred; that the body and blood of Christ are really

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present, and are distributed to those who receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper ; * that absolution is the voice of God, and is pronounced by the command of God ; and that private absolution ought to be retained. Would that the great body of our Latitudinarians, might be led to entertain views so catholic and so conformed to the formularies which they have subscribed and which they daily use ! From what has been said, it will appear that the national church of Prussia cannot in any way, be identified with the non-episcopal communions in our island, either in discipline or in doctrine ; and moreover, that it singularly agrees, in the most material points of the latter, with the Church of England. We differ from the Prussian establishment in a matter which, though most essential, might soon be made up between us, a want, an imperfection *de facto*, which might easily be supplied ; while, with

* I believe that the view entertained by orthodox Lutherans, of the presence of our Lord and Saviour in the sacrament of his body and blood, is practically the same with that held by the Church of England, viz. that his presence, though real, is spiritual and in a mystery. The doctrine of consubstantiation, though it has so much prevailed among them, as to be regarded as one of their distinguishing tenets, has generally subsided into the recognition of a real, though spiritual, presence. This is peculiarly the case in those countries where, as in Prussia, the two communions of Lutheran and Calvinist, have been united.

the Church of Rome, our differences are concerning deep-rooted doctrinal errors, and widely-spread practical corruptions, which the most sanguine hope can never expect to see corrected or remedied. This digression must be pardoned, as it does not seem irrelevant, to vindicate our Prussian ally from charges which only proceed from ignorance of her real position, and to show that even, were we more identified with her than we really are, the danger to our catholicity would not be so great, as some, with an anxiety misplaced, but not unnatural, seem to apprehend.

We will admit that there may be some reason to imagine that an impression exists among the Germans, at least among those imperfectly informed, of our having in this transaction renounced the higher grounds of churchmanship, and of our being ready to place ourselves precisely upon the same footing with the Protestantism of the continent. Indeed, it has been asserted in Prussian documents, that the heads of the Church of England have admitted all Protestant Christendom to be one church, and that this "Protestant Bishopric" is to be the representative in the eyes of the whole christian world, of the "Protestant, Reformed, Evangelical Church."

Yet even although this way of viewing the matter should have obtained among some of the German Protestants, and although there may be individuals of our own communion, who incline to regard it in the same light, our church has carefully avoided the recognition of any such principle. She has, in this instance, pursued the line of consistency and prudence, which has always distinguished her intercourse with imperfect Protestant communions.* Indeed the spirit in which the Metropolitan of the Anglican Church, and those prelates with whom he consulted, met the noble and pious proposition of the King of Prussia, was such as every true Christian and sound churchman had reason to desire and to expect. They gladly agreed to co-operate with him in his labour of love, and they made every advance

* On the accession of King William the Third, when the Church of Scotland was subverted and the Presbyterian sect was raised to be the national establishment, an attempt was made to innovate upon the Church of England. By way of concessions, to promote the union of Protestants, Archbishop Tillotson proposed to admit to the ministry of the Anglican Church, without re-ordination, those who had been already ordained in foreign Protestant communions. But this attempt was negatived in convocation; as was also an address to the King, which, in thanking him for the benefits which he had conferred on Protestants, seemed to imply the identification of those of the continent with our Church.

which it was possible for them to make, without the slightest compromise of principle. The statement of the proceedings in this matter, which has lately been published by authority, will be a lasting memorial of the sound judgment of him by whom it was drawn up, and of the enlightened piety and prudence of those who, together with him, directed the arrangement of the transaction. No one who candidly peruses it, will venture to assert that our church is in the slightest degree compromised, so as to admit of an identity with the Protestantism of Germany. And it is, on the other hand, quite vain to attempt to steer clear of reproach or misconception, from those whose wish it is to censure, or whose interest it is to misconstrue.

A Popish missionary in the East may, and will endeavour to demonstrate that the Anglican Church, now planted there, is not a true branch of the apostolic tree; and he may point to the union of Anglicans who hold episcopacy, with Lutherans, among whom, as we say, episcopacy is in abeyance, but whom he will affirm to have rejected it, in proof of his assertion. A Greek Bishop may possibly choose to consider the Anglican Church as being in all respects identical with Protes-

tantism, as it comes under his own observation on the continent, because he sees Lutherans of the Confession of Augsburg acting in concert with Anglo-Catholics. A low church member of our own communion may hail this union with satisfaction, as a fancied confirmation of his own imperfect and latitudinarian views. An English Dissenter, or Scottish Presbyterian, may triumph in it, as a supposed false step of the English Church, coming inconsistently more than half way to meet him, though on foreign ground ; little considering that he and a right-minded Prussian are wide as the poles asunder in doctrine, and, we may add, in discipline ; for that which the former adopts wantonly and from choice, the latter has yielded to from the pressure, as he conceived, of necessity. While one who is still an Anglican in name, though he is a Papist at heart, may strive to disparage this union, because in it, he perceives the probable germ of the most deadly injury about to be inflicted on the Church of Rome. But in order that the erroneous opinions and expressions of all these various classes of religionists may be rectified, let them carefully peruse the admirable document to which I have already adverted.

Moved by the most catholic spirit, the King

of Prussia selected the individual * in his dominions, who, from his high principles, learning, and intimate acquaintance with England and her church, possessed the most fitting qualifications for the important task, and sent him to invite the Metropolitan and heads of our church, to co-operate with him on her own principles. He desired no concession from her, only sympathy and aid. He sought a gift, which she alone, under the circumstances, could fully confer—apostolical powers. He requested her to bestow upon certain members of his own national communion, that in which they were deficient, and to associate them with her clergy, in a great and holy work—to promote the common interests of Christendom. We have every reason to feel grateful to the King of Prussia, for having smoothed all difficulties, by frankly conceding so much to the Anglican Church; for having waived the claim which, as a continental Protestant, he might naturally enough have asserted that his communion possessed, of standing on a footing of perfect equality with the Church of England. On the contrary, according to the arrangement which has been made, the missionaries sent from Prussia, are to be or-

* The Chevalier Bunsen.

dained by the Anglican Bishop, in conformity with the ritual of the Church of England. They are to sign our Articles, and to use a national liturgy, already existing in the German language, which, having been found to agree in all points of doctrine with ours, is expressly sanctioned by the Bishop, with the consent of our Metropolitan. And so carefully has the integrity of our church been guarded, that although it is required of the German clergy to sign the Confession of Augsburg, as well as our Thirty-nine Articles, yet the reason of this is explained to be, that they may not be disqualified, by their national laws, from officiating to German congregations. In short, the consideration and delicacy which the Prussian monarch has shown towards our Church, is beyond all praise. That he might accomplish a specific purpose of christian charity, in its noblest and truest sense, on which his great soul had long been intent, he required our co-operation; and in order to obtain it, he addressed himself to our Church, proposing such terms as he knew would not compromise her, and, as he confidently hoped, would be satisfactory to her. And, blessed be God, he has not been disappointed. He has been met, as he had reason to expect, with the most cordial

christian sympathy, and there can be no doubt that the feelings which have thus been elicited from both communions, will foster more and more between them, a spirit of true catholicity. It may be added, that no composition can be more truly primitive or christianly classical, than the admirable letter commendatory from the Archbishop of Canterbury, in favour of the Bishop newly appointed, and addressed to the prelates of the ancient, apostolical churches of the East. It may be regarded as a model of this style of writing.

But we are led to anticipate, from the establishment of the bishopric in Jerusalem, consequences even more important than the protection of the Christians of Protestant communions in the East, and the introduction of a better understanding between the Church of England and the Oriental churches. There is a very remarkable passage in the already-mentioned document "published by authority," which concentrates our attention to the state of Germany : "We may reasonably hope that it (the establishment of the bishopric in Jerusalem) may lead the way to an essential unity of discipline, as well as of doctrine, between our own church and the less perfectly constituted churches of Europe." Much speculation on

this subject may at present be premature and ill-judged ; for it is one of great delicacy, and its difficulties might be increased by previous surmisings. But in connexion with it, I cannot forbear to quote a sentence* from the last of the following Sermons, which seems singularly to bear upon it: “ We may entertain similar hopes, (of the adoption of apostolical discipline,) with regard to the continental nations. The Protestants of Germany and the North will, ere long, renounce the errors of their imperfect discipline, and, by a great movement, advance to our catholicity, bending joyfully under the apostolical yoke.” Is it too much to hope, even although, in the first instance, the minds of the royal mover and the venerable seconders of this enterprize, may not have distinctly contemplated consequences beyond the advantage of Protestants in the East, and of Jews inhabiting the land of their fathers, that it may yet be destined, in the providence of God, to be the first step towards some great national advance in catholicity? For here, the principal Protestant communion of Germany has been brought into the most intimate relations with our Church ; and that, confessedly, with the understanding

* Page 335.

that we are able to impart to it a gift of which it stands in need. If hereafter, the event should turn out according to these speculations, how noble will be the task allotted by God, to the monarch of the first Protestant continental state, and how gloriously will his name be recorded in the annals of history, as a zealous nursing father of Christ's church! It would be a holy and generous act, to exchange the sovereign prerogative over an Erastian national establishment, which is but the parasite of the state, for the christian privilege of grounding a true branch of the catholic church, on the apostolic rock, as its foundation, and protecting it in the maintenance of its just and due independence. Let us earnestly pray that this blessed task may yet be reserved for the illustrious monarch who has courted our alliance, with such confiding trust and disinterested generosity.

Thus, if we have not too much consulted our own ardent wishes, in interpreting the important passage which has been quoted from "the statement of proceedings published by authority," it will be found, that, notwithstanding the uncharitable judgment of some, whose ecclesiastical zeal is rapidly degenerating into a wretched hankering after Rome, the rulers of

our Church, so far from having rashly incurred the risk of unchurching her, have, on the contrary, good reason to hope, that the line of conduct which they have pursued, will ultimately lead to the widest possible diffusion of our catholicity. For we may expect that continental Romanists, when they hereafter, see true doctrine brought before them in their own lands, by the teaching of a perfect branch of the apostolical church, may be induced to renounce their pernicious novelties for ancient truths, when these are presented to them under primitive forms. Thus the charge of isolation will be removed further and further from us, and will become more and more applicable to Rome, the most isolated of all churches, because the most hardened and obstinate in error.

While we have thus the cheering prospect of the rapid extension of our catholic communion over the distant places of the earth, events, which are passing nearer home, lead us to speculate upon the likelihood of a similar result in Scotland, at no very remote period. Of all the national forms of Protestantism, the Presbyterian establishment in that country, is the furthest removed from us; and yet we cannot help regarding it as more than possible,

that the pressure of circumstances may, ere many years are over, lead it within the pale of our communion. If the party at present dominant in the kirk and opposed to the State, act with consistency, we cannot but regard as probable, their speedy secession from the establishment, accompanied by considerable weight in numbers, energy, and zeal. While another strong body will thus be added to the numerous Presbyterian seceders already existing, the establishment is even now frequently abandoned, on the other hand, by many of the higher and better educated classes, who seek in the bosom of the Church, that quiet, of which the turbulence of clerical agitation has for some years deprived them. It may be observed also, that, to the Church, at least one half of the Scottish nobility and landed gentry have always belonged. By this two-fold secession, the establishment will be much reduced in its numbers, and weakened in its energies. The more violent Presbyterian partisans will have left it, and those who remain in possession of its endowments, though perhaps not actually penetrated with a sense of the necessity of episcopacy, will have been taught, by their late storms and troubles, the disadvantage of Pres-

byterial parity, and the benefit of ruling authority.

Thus, diminished to an extent which will render its claim to usefulness, as the national establishment, at least very questionable, and assailed by the fury of sectarian assaults, it will not be wonderful if the kirk, in its distress, is led to entertain the idea of uniting itself with the Church, which it once supplanted, but which has continued, unextinguished by penury, unwithered by persecution, and unharmed by contumely, in her quiet christian course, blessing and cursing not, and is now rewarded for her meek endurance, by returning prosperity. As the majority of the tithe or teind payers are already Episcopalians, and as their number is increasing, it may be supposed that they would gladly see the national endowments possessed by those of their own communion. The more moderate * of the clergy, who will then be left in possession of those endowments, are likely rather to favour than oppose a union. And the prejudices of the people, who once

* A very numerous clerical secession from the establishment is perhaps not to be expected. But among those that remain, some, even many, who have been to a certain extent, led astray by the more furious, will relapse into moderation.

regarded Prelacy with as great horror as Popery, are rapidly diminishing, and in the large towns at least, will soon be extinct. It is only by the adoption of a sound, and scriptural, and primitive church government, that the really wise and dutiful members of the Scottish kirk can ever hope to oppose the rabid fury of fanatics and demagogues, which is now let loose against them; and this is an assertion of which, though perhaps not immediately, they will one day acknowledge the truth. It may be, too, that the Church in Scotland, with a view to accomplish so great an end as that of spreading its catholicity over the troubled national establishment, might consent to make some concessions of ritual and form, which did not involve any vital principle, and which might facilitate the adoption of essential ecclesiastical truth. And thus we are led to regard, as an event not very remotely future, the transfer of the endowments of the Scottish Establishment to the Scottish Church, and the happy admission, within the pale of our catholicity, of many sound, sober, and pious divines, whom we should gladly hail as brethren. While the people, no longer distracted and agitated by the assertions of spiritual tyranny and the unchristian violence of party strife,

will once more be led by their true shepherds along the old paths, to the green pastures and still waters of life.

This review of the remarkable advance in catholicity, which our Church has already made, and of the prospects of her future progress, is sufficient, not only to repel the charge of isolation, with which Romanists taunt us, and in which some of our wavering brethren seem too ready to acquiesce; but to throw it back upon the Church of Rome, showing her that we are becoming more and more catholic every year, while she remains in the isolation of solitary tyranny. The object of this essay has been to prove, in the first place, that Rome possesses in no possible contingency, any claim upon an Anglican to desert our Church, and to join her communion of schism; and that, on the contrary, such an act would be a fearful sin. Our desire has been, in the next place, to show that Rome, in her present state of usurpation and isolation, can hold out no possible inducement to our communion to advance to her, as the centre of catholicity and unity. The first argument is against an individual, in any case, deserting us and joining her; while the second

is against whatever claims she may advance to induce our Church to unite with her on her own terms. To wish for unity, to pray for it, and to strive to attain to it, is the duty of a Christian ; but in order to effect this, there must be no compromise of principle. Before intercommunion can take place, those communions that are imperfect must become catholic, and those that are erring must be reformed. And, in the mean time, our part is, on the sure ground of the *via media*, to advance the cause of reformed catholicity, holding out, as much as may be, both to the defective and to the erring, the pattern of what the Church of Christ upon earth ought to be. And if we are true to this high vocation, diligently availing ourselves of the immense temporal advantages and opportunities with which Providence has blessed us, and spreading far and wide, primitive faith in primitive forms, we shall fulfil our duty as workmen that need not to be ashamed, having rightly divided the word of truth. But we must remember that even were Rome to cease from her idolatry, usurpation, and schism, and were she to hold out to us such terms of communion as we could accept without compromise of faith and ecclesiastical principles, we should, in our alliance with her, have gained but a portion of that

which we seek ; we should still have to mourn over isolation and division : the adhesion of one half of the christian world would still be wanting, in order to complete our ecclesiastical perfection.

In these two lines of argument, in which we have attempted to combat, 1st, individual secession from us and adhesion to the papacy, in any case ; and 2nd, the necessity of inter-communion between us and the papacy, in order that we may be delivered from the charge of isolation, we wish to observe that we have purposely abstained from taking the highest ground. And we have not thought proper to urge against Rome, the errors of her doctrine and the corruptions of her discipline, so much as to show that, on ecclesiastical principles, the Romish tendency of some members of our Church is quite incompatible with sound churchmanlike views. At the same time, it may be proper distinctly to state, that our object has not been to afford an excuse to Anglicans for continuing members of the Church of England, and to persuade them that duty does not call them to Rome.* It has, on the contrary, been our endeavour to convince them, that their

* We have heard with grief and astonishment, that such a line of argument has actually been taken by clergymen who are still members of the Church of England.

duty is, in our own Church, earnestly to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, and that a secession to Rome would, independently of all the doctrinal error which might therein be involved, partake of the nature of heinous sin.

The matters which have been here discussed, do not, indeed, come naturally within the bounds of a preface to the following Sermons. Yet, they have, almost insensibly, grown out of the explanation of the circumstances under which these sermons were preached, in Rome, and to a congregation of English of all ranks, and, it is to be feared, of various sects, to whom it was peculiarly desirable to set forth the real position and claims of the Church of England. And as the present time is one, which seems particularly to require every sound churchman to declare his opinion, and not to allow himself to sail under false colours, there is little need to apologise for embracing any opportunity of doing this. It is, moreover, the imperative duty of such as have long and cordially agreed with a body of pious, virtuous, and learned men, who, up to a certain point, have been ably fighting the battle of the Church, to declare our disapprobation of the course which these men have more recently followed, our

dissent from some of the opinions which they have of late prominently put forth, our dread of the tendencies which they are now manifesting, and our sorrowful distrust of their judgment and soundness. The *via media* of the Church of England, opposed, on the one hand, to Puritanism, and, on the other hand, to Popery, is the rallying point of sound churchmen ; and one of the most alarming features in the views of the extreme party which has of late developed itself, is the dissatisfaction, almost amounting to contempt, which they evince for our Church, their dislike to our Reformers, and their shame of the principles of the Reformation. Having commenced with fighting the battle of the Church of England, they seem, with strange inconsistency, to be on the point of actually turning against her, and leaguering themselves with her deadly enemy, who is also the enemy, no less of sound churchmanship than of sound doctrine ; usurpation and schism being as prominently branded on her front, as idolatry and error.

But while we protest against those who run riot in church principle, and with the boast of the soundest ecclesiastical views, seem ready to turn from their spiritual mother into the ways which here, are those of schism, and every-

where, are those of usurpation ; let us equally protest against another party, who, while they remain nominally within our pale, do virtually renounce us, by denying our doctrines, and teaching views at variance with the formularies to which they have subscribed, and of which their constant use implies the belief. There is this difference between these two parties ; that while the former profess to take some of our formularies in a sense differing from their plain meaning, the latter endeavour to explain away that meaning according to their views ; and are thus the more dishonest of the two, doing that with a pretended *bona fide* intention, which the others admit to be a violent construction. Without adverting to their false and exaggerated statements on many doctrinal subjects, it is impossible too decidedly to reprobate their low and unworthy views concerning the holiest and most important rites of our religion, depreciating, as they do, the sacraments, denying the regenerating influence of baptism, and setting forth the supper of the Lord as a mere commemorative rite. Of a piece with these errors, is their misconception on the subject of the origin of the christian ministry ; for, through the prevalence of such latitudinarian principles as theirs, the apostolic claims of our

office have been so generally disregarded as to be nearly forgotten, so that any one who now asserts them is almost looked upon as the propounder of some strange novelty. Misunderstanding or undervaluing our ministerial position, and sinking the essential differences which exist between us and the ministers of imperfect Protestant communions, they go as far as it is in the power of individuals to go, in compromising us in the eyes of the christian world. While our Church has, with singular wisdom, avoided all such compromise, and has successfully steered between two extremes; these men, on most occasions, both at home and abroad,* have given cause of doubt concerning their catholicity, as well to Greeks and Romanists, as to members of their own communion.

* As an instance of the conduct which I here venture to blame, I may mention that, a few months since, there were, and perhaps at this very time, there are, an Irish Bishop of the Anglican Church, and two Irish clergymen, residing at Dresden, who are in the habit of attending the ministry of a Lutheran pastor, officiating in English to the numerous society of our countrymen in that city. This German clergyman, who is perfectly acquainted with the English language, and in all respects approves of the forms and ritual of our Church, uses our book of Common Prayer, and preaches what are said to be able and edifying discourses. But when a Bishop and two clergymen of our Church came to reside in Dresden, it was to be expected

While it seems to be the duty of every sound Anglican churchman decidedly to protest against the Romish tendencies, to which we have sorrowfully adverted; we must, in doing so, carefully avoid the other, and, if possible, more dangerous extreme of latitudinarian disregard of what is positive in discipline and in doctrine. And we have reason to thank God, for the safe and strong position, which we hold behind the bulwark of our Liturgy and Articles, and under the rule of apostolic superiors; for if we are only true to ourselves, and worthy of the possession of these advantages, we shall escape the dangers of schism, whether Protestant or Popish. Let us hold to the formularies of our Church, and let us duly estimate the origin of our ministry, and the authority of our episcopacy, and we

that they would have ministered to their countrymen in sacred things. And when they formed a part of this worthy Lutheran pastor's English congregation, they certainly identified themselves with him, and admitted the regularity of that which our Church regards as irregular. It was difficult to impress a Romanist with a sense of our position in the *via media*, when he could point to such very inconsistent conduct on the part of a Bishop of our Church. My respect for his office prevents me from mentioning his Lordship's name. And I trust that he may yet be brought to some sense of his irregularity, if by no higher motive, at least by reflecting upon the line of conduct which our Church has always followed,

shall escape, on the one hand, the vague and indefinite views of doctrine which are, more or less, the curse of the Protestant sects; while, on the other hand, we shall be prevented from seeking, in a communion of usurpation and tyranny, after that ecclesiastical standard which we possess, in much greater purity and truth, within our own pale. How is it possible, it might be asked, that with an ecclesiastical government and positive formularies such as ours, any of our countrymen should have wandered into the innumerable by-paths of Protestant schism; or any of our brethren should have become forgetful of the right constitution of a church? And how is it possible, that any amongst us should be so little impressed with our catholicity, as to hesitate concerning our claims, and to waver on the confines of Romanism? These departures from sound belief and right forms proceed from the abeyance into which true church principles, both as to doctrine and discipline, had generally fallen among the generations which have preceded us. And we are now made to pay the penalty of the supineness of our predecessors. Let the spirit be revived by which our Church was animated in the days which preceded the great rebellion.

Let us entrench ourselves upon our apostolic position, which is a stronghold; and let us fearlessly maintain the catholic doctrines of the Church of Christ, the confession of primitive and positive belief; and we may anticipate the speedy conversion of ingenuous minds, lovers and seekers of truth. Let us boldly preach the great facts of Christianity, the positive doctrines of our faith; unmindful of the prevailing disinclination to dwell upon strictly drawn definitions of truth, and the intolerance of creeds and confessions, which characterise the popular religion of the day. Let us set forth the outward and visible Church, as an institution of heavenly origin, fixed by divine authority, and not left to the caprice of men, or to their notions of expediency. If, by this line of conduct, we oppose the rationalistic and latitudinarian tendencies which prevail so greatly among us, and which adhere, even when unacknowledged and unsuspected, to the religion of many of the truly pious; we may hope to be blessed, by witnessing the establishment of most earnest and candid minds on a Catholic foundation, abandoning the imperfections of superficial puritanism, and restrained by the conscious possession of catholicity, from a vain search after that matchless pearl, in

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the crooked ways of spiritual despotism and imposture. Let the real position of the Anglican Church, on the rock of catholicity, apostolicity, and episcopacy, be ever prominently set forth; and let the partisans of extreme views contemplate her moderation, instead of mutually regarding each other's violence. Let those who have been led astray by Puritanical or Popish tendencies, endeavour to model their views to her standard, instead of striving to differ from one another, even unto the distance of unwarrantable extremes; and then we shall be enabled to look upon our breaches as healed, and upon our hosts as girded for the conflict with the numbers who, alas! will still perversely adhere to ways of error.

It would almost seem that the royal martyr, of whose death this is the anniversary, though dead yet speaketh, in order to recommend to us such a line of conduct. Such was, in evil times, the course which he pursued, and he willingly sealed his testimony with his blood. He would have taught and ruled the nation in the fear of God and in the unity of the Church, but with bloody hands and traitorous hearts, those whose consciences were seared by the madness of extremes, put to death the anointed

servant of the Lord, and governor of his people. The Puritan in open rebellion, and the Papist with secret machination, conspired to slay the royal and the righteous son of our venerable Church. Then was inflicted the fatal blow, from which the English establishment has, until now, never recovered. The flood-gates were then opened to a ruinous tide of license, confusion, and private interpretation; which has never yet wholly receded. The gloomy reign of fanaticism which followed, left a taint behind, which has never yet been entirely effaced, and which has manifested itself at different times, according to circumstances, in the opposite forms of bigotry and laxity; but ever retaining its wilful and irreverent spirit. Though in Charles, and those who thought like him, and acted in concert with him, we shall, in vain seek for perfect models, and though somewhat was done by them with imprudence, and in a way calculated to revolt rather than to conciliate, we cannot help reverting to them, with feelings of admiration, as knowing and maintaining the real ground on which they were entitled to stand, better than any body of Anglicans between their day and ours. And though we may differ from them in various particulars, and regard some of their acts

as practically unwise; we must express our cordial approbation of the general line of their views and arguments, and our admiration of their constancy in suffering even unto death, and bearing unflinching witness to the great truths, doctrinal and ecclesiastical, which it is our duty to inculcate, and for which, if need be, it would be our privilege to endure the loss of all things.

“ True son of our dear mother, early taught
With her to worship, and for her to die,
Nursed in her aisles to more than kingly thought,
Oft in her solemn hours we dream thee nigh.

For thou didst love to trace her daily lore,
And where we look for comfort or for calm,
Over the selfsame lines to bend, and pour
Thy heart with hers, in some victorious psalm.

And well did she thy loyal love repay;
When all forsook, her Angels still were nigh,
Chained and bereft, and on thy funeral way
Straight to the Cross she turned thy dying eye,

And yearly now before the martyr's King,
For thee, she offers her maternal tears,
Calls us, like thee, to His dear feet to cling,
And bury in His wounds our earthly fears.”

Christian Year.

*Bolsover Castle,
Anniversary of the Martyrdom
of King Charles, 1842.*

SERMONS.

SERMON I.

THE DIVINE WORD BECOMES CHRIST.

2 TIMOTHY iii. 16.

Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh.

GOD was manifest in the flesh. It is not here intended to explain these words, which, as taken for the text, are separated from their context; but to use them as a point from whence to proceed in an examination of the way in which, by means of miracle and prophecy, God has revealed himself to mankind. And if to any one these remarks should appear not to be of immediate practical utility, be-

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cause they are designed rather to inform the understanding than to touch the heart, and are rather addressed to reason than to the feelings; let it be considered that they cannot fail to produce the best spiritual effect, if they tend to remove confused notions on the most important of all subjects, and to set in a clear light that on which our eternal hopes depend—the incarnation of God the Son.

When the wonders which the sacred writings affirm to have been performed by the power of God, are viewed in reference to the great truth that He was manifest in the flesh, we shall cease to be astonished at their supernatural character, and shall regard them as nothing more than the appropriate harbingers of “the mystery which hath been hid from ages and generations, but was in the fulness of time made manifest, viz. Christ Jesus, and the hope of everlasting glory through him.” (Coloss. i. 26.) The working of miracles alone cannot be regarded as the test of a divine commission. For there

are instances of wonders performed in opposition to the truth of God, which are so extraordinary in their nature as scarcely to be distinguished from those by which the Almighty commissioned his servants to manifest his power. Of this we have a remarkable instance in the imitations with which the magicians of Egypt mocked many of the Mosaic wonders. If the subversion of the laws of nature were alone to be regarded as a sufficient indication by the Lord's hand of those who were his, and who acted by his appointment, there might be some difficulty in deciding between the source of the miraculous powers of Moses and that of the wonders of Jannes and Jambres who withstood him, or between St. Paul and Elymas the sorcerer, until the blindness of the latter attested the authority of the apostle of the living God. To Him, who is the Lord of nature, all its hidden things are manifest, and its powers are submissive; and an entire change in its order, or a partial subversion of its ordi-

nary laws, though, at first sight, they seem to us most wonderful, almost cease to appear so, when they are regarded as acts of the Great Being who spanned the heavens,—who divided the light from the darkness, and who set bounds to the floods of ocean. The daily rising and setting of the sun, and the ebb and flow of the sea, are no less indications of the Almighty's power and presence, than was the standing still of the sun upon Gibeon, and of the moon in the valley of Ajalon, or the Red Sea becoming a wall on either side, so as to permit the children of Israel to pass through it in safety. We are accustomed to view the former class of events without wonder, as belonging to the ordinary course of nature, while we regard the latter as strikingly indicative of Almighty interposition. But to God they are equal. He who formed the sun at first, impels our earth round it, that we may enjoy its heat and light; and there was really no greater exercise of his might when he stopped the earth for a

few hours in its course, or made the sun appear to stand still in order to give a sign to his people. He who first collected the floods of the deep, continues to supply them, and to direct their tides ; and the exercise of his power was not in reality greater, when He caused those floods to stand up in a heap, and the depths to be congealed in the heart of the sea.

But the absolute control over nature, which, when viewed in relation to the Godhead, cannot justly excite our wonder, affords ground for speculation when we see it exerted by the enemies of the Deity, and in opposition to what we believe to be his will. The miracles of Moses were in consequence of power delegated to him by his Divine Master in vindication of his glory. But what shall we say when we perceive a portion of the same power to have been possessed by the opposers of God's truth ? How came Jannes and Jambres, or the witch of Endor, or Elymas the sorcerer, to be able to exert an authority over

nature, which we justly regard as subject to God's supreme rule? There is reason to believe that Satan, as prince of the power of the air, possesses a great subordinate authority over the world. This he appears to have enjoyed, with fewer restrictions on its exercise, before the advent of Christ; but it has continued, and will continue, in a measure, until the Spirit of Evil be finally bound with everlasting chains in the blackness of darkness. The supernatural powers which have been exerted by wicked persons in the furtherance of bad designs may be supposed to have immediately sprung from Satan, the father of lies and delusion; and this idea is confirmed by the remarkable decrease of such appearances, since life and immortality were brought to light by Christ our Lord. The oracles of the demon gods of ancient mythology are silent; devils no longer possess and torment the bodies of men; the wonders of sorcerers and soothsayers are fallen into discredit, and any remaining pretensions to such

powers are derided as the tricks of fraud and imposture.

But in order to account for miracles having been performed by evil persons, and to accomplish bad designs, we are not obliged to have recourse to the immediate agency of apostate spirits. The question why did God allow miraculous powers ever to be possessed by wicked persons, or to be exerted for evil purposes, is one of no harder solution than another question; why does the great and good God permit evil to exist in the world? Why did He not keep his creatures innocent? Why did He not cause his creation to remain perfect as it sprung from his hands in all the original freshness and vigour of unsullied youth? God tolerates evil for a time, even because this earth is a land of trial, and not of perfection and security. An abode of blessedness and of peace awaits those who have fought the good fight, and have overcome. But we are called on to engage in the battle before the palm of vic-

tory is held out to us. Sin is permitted to assail us, but, at the same time, divine assistances are vouchsafed to us. If we apply with honest and true hearts unto the Lord, He will enable us to overcome. Yet, at the same time, it is necessary for our eternal happiness that we should be assailed, and that an opportunity should be given us of acquitting ourselves by God's grace, like his faithful servants.

As, in the general course of divine providence, sin is permitted to oppose the observance of God's laws, in order that his people may be proved, and that the trial of their faith may be glorious and honourable; even so, in particular instances we find extraordinary powers vouchsafed to persons, who are, the least of any, under the influence of God's fear and love. But every instance of this has tended directly or indirectly to the furtherance of God's glory, and to the accomplishment of his great purposes. However opposed, devils, familiar spirits, and wizards, with their enchantments, might

be to the divine rules, and the truth of God, they served in particular instances, as sin itself serves in general, to advance the great purposes of Providence — to make the world altogether a land of probation, and to render the ultimate triumph of piety and virtue still more glorious.

But, although the power of performing wonders whereby the course of nature is interrupted, or her laws are subverted, is not alone to be regarded as the proof of a divine commission, it affords a satisfactory evidence of one, when it is taken in connexion with other circumstances. When the personal character, conduct, and doctrine of the individual who works miracles correspond with the office of a messenger of God, and when the commission and authority claimed by him are in harmony with a series of divine revelations and prophecies spread over a lapse of ages, and pointing to such an one as their fulfilment; then no reasonable doubt can be left on the mind concerning his claim to be a heavenly mes-

senger, or concerning the reality of his commission.

These marks, which serve to distinguish miracles performed in witness of the truth of God from the lying wonders of unrighteousness, are most strikingly apparent in our blessed Lord and Saviour. For He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. He spake as never man spake. He made the offer of life eternal to man. He brought the hope of a blessed immortality fully to light to the nations of a world sunk in ignorance, or debased by superstition. And his doctrines, besides breathing the most sublime and fervent piety, contained the rules of that pure morality, which were embodied in the acts of his life.

But the object of this discourse is not to compare the miracles which attested the divine commission of our Lord, with the system of religious and moral instruction, and the pure and holy life, which gave to that attestation its weight. The words of the text, "God was manifest

in the flesh," are to be applied in order to direct your attention to the other branch of testimony to which we have just adverted; viz. the divine revelation and the promises of God, spread over a lapse of ages, and pointing to Christ as their fulfilment.

Those among the countrymen of our Lord who were moved to believe on Him, did not receive the miracles performed by Him as the one great convincing proof of the divinity of his mission. They were then waiting in expectation of the coming of the Messiah. The voice of prophecy concerning Him pointed to that very time as the period of its fulfilment. And when Jesus of Nazareth appeared, the circumstances of his descent, birth, and early history, showed that He it was concerning whom the inspired men of ancient times had spoken. Belief in this was strengthened to conviction by the holiness of his life, the purity of his doctrine, the simplicity of the faith which He inculcated, and also by the surpass-

ing wonders which He performed. All these circumstances connected together convinced those who were not wilfully blind, that Jesus of Nazareth was no other than He who "should finish the transgression, make an end of sin, make reconciliation for iniquity, bring in everlasting righteousness, and seal up the vision and prophecy." (Dan. ix.) Or, in other words, and those the words of the text, that in Him was the mystery of godliness revealed, that He was "God manifest in the flesh."

Therefore, when the people saw his manifestations of miraculous power, and compared them with the doctrines which He taught, the conduct by which He was distinguished, the preceding circumstances of his birth and past life, and the prophecies which went before concerning Him, they rightly exclaimed, "This is the Son of God." And this was not a mere expression of their belief in Jesus as a great teacher sent by the Almighty, who, on account of excellence

superior to that of his fellow-men, peculiarly merited this appellation. "Son of God" had reference to the belief which prevailed in the ancient Jewish church from the earliest times, and which regarded the divine economy in general, and all the revelations which had been vouchsafed from the Deity to man, as proceeding from that Person who was the eternal Word, the everlasting Son of the everlasting Father. When we view our blessed Saviour as the Incarnation of Jehovah—when we apply to Him the words of the text, "God was manifest in the flesh," we shall cease to regard as wonderful the miracles which He performed. Nay, it would have been more wonderful, had his mission upon earth been unaccompanied by any such manifestations of Almighty power. The supernatural events which are recorded in the New Testaments, instead of fostering the doubting spirit of the sceptic, ought rather to confirm our belief in the great truths, of which the revelation was accompanied by

these miracles. For, as the miracles would not have afforded satisfactory proof, had they been unconnected with doctrine and corresponding practice ; and had they not been preceded by prophecy, and universal expectation founded on prophecy ; even so, the advent of Him, who was foretold by the prophets, who brought life and immortality to light, and who appeared on earth as the incarnate God, would have been strange and unnatural, had it not been attended by signs and wonders, which, by the degree of power they exhibited, were suited to the magnitude of the occasion. If God's dealings with men appear wonderful in individual miracles, they are infinitely more so, when considered in relation to the creation and government of the universe ; and his occasional deviation from the rules of nature by himself established, ought not, when rightly considered, to excite surprise, but rather to confirm our faith, by bringing immediately before us the mighty arm of the Lord, of whose

operation we are too apt to lose sight, when veiled behind the ordinary working of the laws of nature.

Our blessed Saviour is held up to our veneration as Lord of endless life, God in man, everlasting Word, not so much on the ground of the miracles which the sacred history records as having been performed by Him, as on that of the spiritual life which he imparts. The apostles challenge not our belief in Christ because He performed this or that miracle. But they say, Believe on Him, who died and rose again, and ascended to heaven, from whence He sends his Holy Spirit upon his church. His resurrection must not be regarded as an individual miracle, like that of Lazarus, but as the foundation of the eternal union of the divine and human natures in heaven, from whence He imparts his blessed Spirit to all of us who will receive the glad tidings of the Gospel. The miracles of Christ do not bear a more convincing attestation in support of his divinity, than He him-

self does in favour of their reality. When regarded as acts of the Divine Mediator, they cease to excite our surprise, for then they appear natural, and their absence would have been inconsistent with our ideas of Christ's character, and of the nature of his mission. The Lord of everlasting life revives and quickens the souls of his servants; and it was no more than was to be expected, that he should possess the power of reanimating a body with life which is perishable. Christ is the Word of God, Lord of the universe, God manifest in the flesh; and He thus embodies in himself the powers of nature which He bends to his will, and which, while He dwelt on earth, He made to subserve the great purpose of attesting the divinity of his character, and the truth of his mission.

Let the commencement of the Gospel of St. John be taken as the groundwork of our system of theology; and then the miracles of our Saviour will follow as a necessary consequence of the mission of

Him, who was the " Word, which in the beginning was with God, and which was God, by whom all things were made, and without whom was not anything made that was made; who became flesh, and dwelt among men." (St. John i.) Or, as it is shortly expressed in the text, was " God manifest in the flesh."

The great truth which is realized in the New Testament, of God, as the Divine Word, enlightening and inspiring human nature, forms the groundwork of the ancient history of Israel, no less than of the historical part of the Gospel writings. The whole ancient Jewish economy, civil as well as religious, was founded upon the divine revelation, which first called the favoured people of God into existence, separating the faithful seed to himself; and which afterwards guided each step of their national progress. And the analogy between the Old Testament history and the evangelical narrative is the more striking, since we are not to regard the wonders upon which it is founded as

being individual occurrences, so much as being the entire system of God's dealings, corresponding with the idea of himself which He has revealed to man.

The divine origin of the history of the Old Testament is shown by promises, legislation, and prophecy. The history of the patriarchs, though unaccompanied by miracles in the strictest sense, is throughout enlivened by the word of divine promise, and is founded upon the frequent intercourse which the Almighty vouchsafed to his servants. The word of divine promise forms the basis of patriarchal tradition, and caused the separation of a peculiar people from every other nation, which was blessed in order to prove a blessing to the world.

Under the law, and the theocratical constitution of Israel, it is not the miracles of the Exodus, nor the wondrous journey across the desert, which constitute the chief proof of the divine mission of Moses, the servant of the Most High. It is the entire system of legislation which proves

the divine origin of the miracles. In it, we perceive a connexion of the most sublime morality with the particulars of doctrinal belief and religious observance, and a beneficial operation of this union on the civil and political condition of the people, which is without example in any other history. The immediate presence and the fear of God was the lofty source from whence the Israelites' observance of moral and social, as well as religious, duty sprang. The people was consecrated as holy to the Lord. The Lord was in the midst of them. Had Moses or the ruling priestly family been the authors of the religious and civil legislation of the Hebrews, like Solon or Lycurgus in Greece, they would not have shackled themselves with a system which demanded not outward observance only, but which set out from a higher principle, and required purity and holiness of heart as well as of manners. The character of uncompromising holiness which distinguishes the Mosaic laws points out their

divine origin, and separates them from every other code of antiquity. The miracles which accompanied the giving of the law are in full harmony with the divine origin stamped upon its import. The law without the miracles would be more wonderful and less natural than it is with them. The miracles do not stand apart as mere supernatural wonders. They are the works of God, performed in connexion with his greater work of promulgating law and doctrine. They are a natural consequence of the presence of the Almighty, which is the beginning and the end of the Mosaic code.

During the period of prophecy, as well as during that of promise, miracles, properly speaking, are few. The promises proceeded from the *λογος* or divine Word immediately addressing himself to the faith of his servants; while, in the prophecies, He impressed the minds of the messengers whom He selected to bear his commands to the people: A confusion will arise in our understanding of the

prophecies which have reference to our blessed Saviour, if we regard him as the Son of the almighty Being who is revealed to us as God in the scriptures of the Old Testament. "No man hath seen God at any time," says Christ: "the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." (St. John i. 18.) The everlasting Father manifested himself of old by means of his Son, who was then known to man "in the form of God;" but who afterwards, for our sakes, "made himself of no reputation, and dwelt upon earth, being made in the likeness of men, and humbled himself, and became obedient to the death of the cross." (Philippians ii.) The glorious Being who revealed himself to the patriarchs of old, who, with wonders and mighty power, delivered and reigned over the children of Israel, and who spoke to his people by his inspired prophets, was the same who, in the fulness of time, put on flesh, and dwelt among men, and suffered and died for our salvation, offering the atone-

ment of his blood for our sins, and making a rich provision of mercy for our souls. If we regard as the everlasting Father, that almighty Being who is revealed to us in the Old Testament as creating and sustaining the world, ruling the fate of empires, and directing the destinies of the people, our views of his dealings with mankind must be liable to considerable confusion. If God, who is made known to us in the Old Testament, be one and the same person with the sending Father of our Saviour, a discrepancy will be found between his dealings with man under the old dispensation and under the new. For, in that case, we should have, in the former, the immediate action and agency of God the Father, while, in the latter, we should find that another person, God the Son, who is sent, steps in between the Creator and the creature. In the Old Testament, we should have the Father acting immediately, and in the New, we should have Him acting through the medium of his Son. This view is one which, as

it is well calculated to do, has led into error. It is justified neither by the Old Testament nor by the New, and is favoured neither by prophecy nor by its fulfilment. For although our Lord Jesus Christ, speaking of himself in his human nature, ascribes his mission to God or the Father, he at the same time distinctly intimates that He, the Almighty of the Old Testament, that He, the God of the ancient Jewish church, is now come down to the earth in order to redeem and to purify man. To redeem him, by offering up the sacrifice of himself to atone to the justice of his Godhead for his sins; to purify him, by becoming head of the new spiritual creation; in order that as in Adam, our first head, we all die, even so in Christ Jesus, our second head, we should all be made alive.

Let us take the commencement of St. John's gospel as the rule of our belief. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word

was God." In the beginning mentioned by Moses in the first chapter of Genesis, when the foundations of the existing world were laid, for before that there was no measure of time, was the Word; that is, the eternal Son of the Most High, who afterwards appeared in our likeness as our Lord Jesus Christ. It is not said that in the beginning was the Word created, but in the beginning was the Word, thus existing from before all worlds. And if any one should say, where was this Word before the beginning of all things, before the foundations of the world were laid? the evangelist has his answer ready, "The Word was with God." This distinguishes God the Son from all created beings, for of none of them can it be said, that they were in the beginning with God; and it also points out his distinction from the Father. He was co-existent with Him, but He must not be confounded with Him. And if any one should say, Who but God can be eternal? the evangelist replies, "The

word was God." In this verse are three important things pointed out. 1. The eternity of God the Son, before the world was made ; as our Lord said of himself, Before Abraham was, I am ; not I began to exist, but I am, thus assuming the awful name Jehovah. 2. The relation of the Son to the Father. He existed with Him, and distinct from Him in person. 3. The sameness of his nature and essence with that of the Father.

" All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." In these words the creation of all things is attributed to God the Son ; and that they refer to Christ is shown us on the authority of St. Paul, who, speaking of Him, says, " By Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible ; all things were created by Him and for Him." (Coloss. i. 16.) " God hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made

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the worlds." (Hebrews i. 2.) The divinity and eternal existence of our Lord Jesus Christ are clearly asserted in these expressions. And we are moreover directed by them to look upon Him as the almighty Being to whose immediate agency all the divine works of creation, miracles, and inspiration in the Old Testament, are ascribed.

"And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." The everlasting Son, the Creator of all, the Sustainer of all, the almighty Being who manifested himself to the patriarchs, who gave laws to his chosen people, and who inspired the prophets, was made truly man. He assumed a human nature, he put on our flesh, he became like unto us in all things, sin only excepted, and dwelt among us to teach us, and died for us to redeem us. Let our view of the Saviour's work set out with a distinct recognition of these great truths, and then we shall be kept from error, and guided in the paths of right christian belief.

In the fortieth chapter and ninth verse of the prophecies of Isaiah it is said, "Behold the Lord God will come with a strong hand, and his arm shall rule for Him; behold his reward is with Him, and his work before Him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, He shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." The prophet evidently speaks in this passage of the Almighty. He announces his advent with power and might; and he gives a most touching description of his faithful love for his people. We may suppose that He more particularly alludes retrospectively to the fostering care with which the Lord watched over the fate of the Jewish nation during the whole period of Old Testament history. According to the gospel of St. John, our blessed Lord applied this description of Jehovah to himself. "I am the good Shepherd. The good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. He that is an hireling and

not the Shepherd, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth. I am the good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine." By taking this name, in allusion to the prophecy, our Saviour pointed to himself as the good Shepherd who had guided his flock, the house of Israel, from the beginning ; who had selected them while they were yet in the loins of their patriarchal father, Abraham ; who had cherished them and led them by signs and wonders into the good land in which he planted them as their inheritance, and in which he now in the fulness of time visited them, in order to give to them, and not to them alone, but to the whole world, the most astonishing proof of mercy and of love. " But he came unto his own," as saith the evangelist, " and his own received Him not." Let us, my brethren, treasure, to our souls' health, the words in continuation : " But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on

his name." May we be of that blessed number! The divine word, the Son of God, was in old times the peculiar guide and governor of his chosen people of Israel, whom He had made the depositaries of his covenant and promise. He is described by their most celebrated prophet as their good Shepherd. The same Son of God did in the fulness of time descend upon earth, and in the human form dwelt among them, and in all things corresponded with the beautiful description given of Him by the pen of inspiration: and He moreover pointed to that very passage descriptive of himself, saying, Lo, here I am, the good Shepherd! Thus the comparison together of these and very many other similar passages of the Old and New Testaments, give to each of them a greater clearness, pointing to the ancient guidance and inspiration of the Son of God, now become Son of man.

The identity of Jehovah with Christ gives a clear explanation of the meaning

of such passages as the following. Jesus said of himself, "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? (John vi. 62;) and, "All things are delivered unto me of my Father, and no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son shall reveal him." (St. Matt. ii. 27.) And again, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." (St. John i. 18.) We know "that the Son of God is come, and hath given unto us understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." (1 St. John v. 20.) This identity of God with Christ is very remarkably shown in the tenth chapter of 1st Corinthians, where St. Paul, alluding to the early history of the Jewish people says, "I would not have you ignorant that all our

fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink ; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. These things were our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted ; neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents." In this passage we find that the providence of Jehovah in supplying nourishment to his people fainting in the wilderness is attributed to Christ, and the provocation with which they made Jehovah angry is said to have been a sin committed against Christ.

The Lord said by the mouth of his prophet Zechariah, " And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications ; and they shall look upon

me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son." (Zechariah xii. 9, 10.) This prophecy is certainly not as yet fulfilled in its utmost extent. But though its plenary accomplishment may be regarded as being future, its partial fulfilment is shown in the nineteenth chapter of St. John's Gospel, and that partial fulfilment is ascribed to Jesus Christ. "One of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water. These things were done that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They shall look on Him whom they pierced." Jehovah in the prophecy saith, "They shall look on me whom they have pierced." The evangelist in the gospel saith, "These things were done, that the scripture might be fulfilled, They shall look upon Him whom they have pierced." Here, then, is Christ identified with Jehovah.

It was not God the Father who immediately guided Israel, calling them in

Abraham, leading them by the guidance of Moses, and establishing them in glory under David and Solomon. It was God the Son, the Almighty Word, by whom all things were originally made, and who (as we are told in the words of the text) became flesh. It was not God, of whom we read in the Old Testament, that sent his Son of whom we read in the New; but it was God the divine word that was equally sent forth by the everlasting Father under both dispensations of the old and new covenant; in the former, revealed to mankind in the form of God, and in the latter, having taken the form of man. The word became flesh. God was manifest in the flesh. But the Father and the Son are so inseparably united, that when the Son of old revealed himself, the Father also was thereby revealed, as our Lord implies in these words, "The only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared him." The difference between the glorious appearances of Jehovah re-

corded in the Old Testament, and the humble advent of our blessed Saviour recorded in the New, is no argument against their identity. This difference is clearly stated by St. Paul. "Christ Jesus, being in the form of God, made himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." (Philip. ii.) The justice of Jehovah required an atonement for the rebellion of erring man, and must have consumed him with its unquenchable flame. But the mercy of Jehovah, clothed in the human form, sought and saved the lost, reclaimed the erring, guided the wandering, and offered an effectual sacrifice to his justice for the sins of a guilty world, "that God might be just, and the justifier of Him which believeth in Jesus." (Rom. iii.) The Almighty, veiling the glories of his Godhead (which must have destroyed the world of sinners) in the mildness and gentleness of a perfect human prophet and teacher, and then submitting with

the patience of a suffering lamb to bear all the bitterness of mortal sorrow, and all the pains of mortal death, for the sake of man, is the noblest and most exalted revelation of divine love in its purity and truth.

Perhaps the most wonderful of all the prophecies of the Old Testament relating to our Saviour, is one which I will cite in conclusion. God thus inspired his prophet Isaiah, and through him addressed his people : “ Hearken unto me, Jacob and Israel, my called ; I am He, I am the first, I also am the last. Mine hand also hath laid the foundations of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens. Come near unto me, hear ye this, I have not spoken in secret from the beginning ; from the time that it was there am I, and now the Lord God and his Spirit hath sent me. Listen, O isles, unto me, and hearken ye people from far ; the Lord hath called me from the womb, from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name.”

In these prophecies, which are to be found in the latter part of the forty-eighth and in the beginning of the forty-ninth chapter of Isaiah, we have a clear proof of the mission and the incarnation of the Deity. The Lord God and his Spirit hath sent me the first and the last, and hath called me from the womb of a mortal mother.

These prophecies do, in the strictest sense, relate to the Messiah, and are in Christ fulfilled. It is a principal point, in examining the Scriptures of the Old Testament, to understand in their essential unity two different strains of prophecy ; one, which points to Jehovah, and another, which points to an exalted individual of David's royal line. And both of these point to the same, to the blessed seed of the woman, to the child who should be born of a virgin, whose name should be Emanuel, or God with us.

Regarding the truth stated in the text, " God was manifest in the flesh," from the Old Testament, as our point of view, we

find that God, after he had created the world by the agency of his divine Son, continued to rule and govern his creation through Him, revealed himself to mankind in Him, and by means of Him established the nation of Israel as a religious medium, by which his pure worship should be kept alive in the world. And after he had ceased outwardly to manifest himself through the Son to this chosen people, he kept up among them, by means of prophetic revelation, a lively expectation and hope of a more full manifestation of himself again through the Son, who should bring life and immortality more perfectly to light. In like manner, regarding the truth stated in the text from the New Testament as our point of view, we find that the Almighty, after ceasing for centuries to reveal himself under a glorious form to his people, did, in his own good time, when the ripened corruption of the whole earth seemed to call loudly for an express revelation from heaven, (in short, when the fulness of time was come,) fulfil the

ancient promises, and accomplish the ancient types and prophecies, by appearing in the human form, pleading our cause with his Godhead as our Mediator, suffering for our sins as our victim, and atoning for us with his blood. "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Gal. iv. 4.)

But whereas Jehovah under the old dispensation established, as his own, a peculiar people, to transmit to future generations his name and worship ; even so, our Lord Jesus Christ, under the new dispensation, has established a church, which is to embrace all nations and every clime, of which He is the great head, and which He will cause more and more gloriously to triumph, until (Isaiah ii. 9) "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea ;" and until, "from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, the

name of the Lord shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered unto his name, and a pure offering, for the name of the Lord shall be great among the heathen." (Malachi i. 11.)

I have been induced, my brethren, at considerable length, to bring before you the catholic doctrine of the incarnation of God the Son, from a conviction that nothing can be more essential to our religious progress than positive and definite views of the great truths of our faith. The appeals of pious sentiment, which are so rapidly expelling from our pulpits the neatly-turned essays which were formerly given to the people instead of the bread of life, are still in very many instances essentially imperfect. It is not enough to bid you believe in Christ, and to invite the heavy-laden sinner to find repose at the foot of the cross. It is necessary to declare who Christ was and is, and to show who it was that on the cross poured out his soul unto death for

your sins. It is essential not to rest satisfied with general declarations. Christ and an atonement are acknowledged by the Socinian ; but he understands thereby a just and holy man sealing with his blood his lessons of beautiful morality, and, by his virtue and obedience, propitiating God in favour of his erring fellow men. Christ the divine Son, and the great works that He performed, are acknowledged by the Arian ; but he understands thereby the first of created beings, the head of all subordinate intelligences, but created, and therefore not really the Son of God. But besides these more striking deviations from catholic doctrine, how many are the shades of error which have existed in the christian church, even among honest and true minds, from want of having been duly exposed by a sincere definition of the right faith ! And how many there are in our own day, who ignorantly cherish views tinged with error, which we may trust are not laid to their charge because of their ignorance, but which mar the

extent of their christian advancement ! Perhaps among the most common of these are indistinct notions concerning the personality and offices of the three persons of the ever-blessed Trinity, which in the early centuries of the church afforded the most fertile soil for heresy, and which, it is to be feared, even now frequently prevail for want of a faithful and distinct definition of catholic doctrine. The temper of many professing Christians is to shrink from such definitions, and to seek repose and comfort in indefinite views concerning the founder of our faith and author of our salvation. And it is more than probable that even were the damnable clauses removed from that most valuable symbol of our faith, the creed of St. Athanasius, it would not on that account become much more palatable to very many.

Let us, my brethren, “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints.” Let us search the Scriptures, and as “scribes instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, bring forth out of

our treasure things new and old.” (St. Matt. xiii. 52.) Let us compare the promise and the type and the prophecy of ancient days with their fulfilment in these latter times by God the Son, “whom his Father hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds, who being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when He had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” (Heb. i.)—Amen.

SERMON II.

CHRIST IS CONSECRATED AS OUR
PRIEST, AND IDENTIFIES HIMSELF
WITH US.

ST. MATT. iii. 16, 17 ; iv. 1.

And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water : and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him ; and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil."

ONE great characteristic difference between the false religions of the ancient

world and the christian revelation, may be briefly stated thus. While the former made divinities of men, the latter brought God among men. According to the former, every human corruption was engrafted on an ideal divine perfection ; while, according to the latter, divine perfection came to purify human corruption. The magnificent superstitions of ancient idolatry, as they existed in the national establishments of Greece and Rome, vainly attempted to dignify human nature by deifying its passions, and by raising to divine honours the men who had through life more particularly exhibited their most powerful influence. While the religion of the cross has invested human nature with true nobility, opening to it a holier source of perfection, by which the stream of divine grace descends to cleanse its corruption, and to impress upon those who resist not its sanctifying power, the mark of sons of God. The religions of Greece and Rome taught that the desires and passions of the human heart are to be

worshipped, and their votaries actually did adore them, personified by the beings whom they acknowledged as deities. While the religion of the cross teaches that instead of regarding the natural sentiments of the mind and feelings and passions of the heart as the voice of God within us, we are obliged to bring these under the yoke of that pure and holy law which the Almighty united his divinity with the human nature in order to promulgate, and to render man, exalted by that union, capable of obeying. And this law, by the influence of God's Spirit inspiring his church and blessing his word, is preserved in validity amid the oppositions and corruptions of the world.

The assumption of the human nature by God the Son had a twofold object, which may be resolved into one. He came at once to offer up a great atoning sacrifice, without which, man could not be admitted into divine favour, and to correct the faults by which man's nature was

vitiated, and which, if uncorrected, would have counteracted the beneficial effect of his atonement. The will of man is the great natural principle, and was the principle of the most polished religious systems of heathenism. The will of God is the great christian principle, and it is only in so far as the will of man can be thereunto subjected, that the benefits of salvation can reach him. The Son of God did not descend from the throne of heaven merely to astonish the world by a great act of love, and to excite the admiration of mankind by a system of religious belief of grand simplicity, and by a rule of moral practice so perfect as to be unattainable. He came to identify himself with us, to show us what is required of us in order that his atoning sacrifice may avail for our salvation, and to bestow on us the means of fulfilling these requirements. "It became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of

their salvation perfect through sufferings.”
(Heb. ii. 10.)

The three verses of the text have reference to the two great and inseparable objects of our blessed Saviour's advent; 1st, to perform the priestly act of a mediatorial sacrifice; 2dly, to identify himself with us in the closest union, whereby we might be enabled in humble activity to follow the great example which he has set before us. This twofold object of his advent is beautifully expressed in these words of St. Paul, “He took on him the seed of Abraham, wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.”
(Heb. ii. 16—18.)

1. Christ came to save us by performing an act of sacrifice to atone for our sins.
2. He came to save us by turning us from

sin, by identifying himself with us, and correcting the evils of our nature.

I. In the two first verses of the text we have the solemn ordination of Emanuel for his priestly office. "The heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him ; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The voice of ancient inspiration announced this remarkable transaction in a prophecy which affords one of the clearest testimonies to the Godhead of the promised Messiah. In the 48th chapter of his prophecies, Isaiah thus conveys to the Hebrew nation a message from the Almighty, who is introduced as thus describing his glorious acts : "Hearken unto me, O, Jacob and Israel, my called, I am He ; I am the first, I also am the last ; mine hand also hath laid the foundations of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens. When I call unto them,

they stand up together. Come ye near unto me, hear ye this. I have not spoken in secret from the beginning ; from the time that it was, there am I, and now the Lord God and his Spirit hath sent me." Observe the Almighty speaks, and says, " Now the Lord God and his Spirit hath sent me." Here is the mission of a divine being ; and this prophecy was fulfilled when the everlasting Son undertook the office of our Mediator, and was sent forth from the throne of his Godhead, and as Emmanuel or God with us, received the ordaining unction of the Holy Ghost. " The Spirit of God, descending like a dove, lighted upon Him, and a voice from heaven said, This is my beloved Son." (St. Matt. iii.) This is the Almighty Son to whom a thousand years are as one day, and who, in days of old, as we reckon time, alluded to this event, addressing his people through the medium of his prophet, " The Lord God and his Spirit hath sent me."

The descent of the Holy Spirit on our

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blessed Lord immediately after his baptism, is on many accounts a circumstance of great importance. It affixed the seal of the divine acknowledgment to his character and mission. By fulfilling the prophecy which we have just quoted, it attested the divinity of our Saviour; and it affords a confutation to those heretics who would impiously deny to the Son, the divine homage which they profess to pay to the Father. It is one among other proofs of the existence of a Trinity in the Godhead; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, concurring in one and the same act. It gives an additional sanction to that sacred rite which was afterwards introduced as the solemn initiation into the christian church. And it was the peculiar act of ordination at the commencement of his ministry, by which the priestly office was conferred upon the Messiah; an office which He first exercised, when He offered up the great atoning sacrifice of Himself upon the cross, and which He perpetuated by

the first act of his resurrection, when He bestowed it upon his apostles, and upon their successors even unto the end of the world.

It is to this latter view, which regards the descent of the Holy Ghost as a peculiar act of ordination, that I would more particularly direct your attention. During our Lord's personal ministry, He claimed not the priestly office. Until the moment of his death, He appeared in the character of a prophet. "Can it be, said He, that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem?" Then, and not till then, was his priestly character openly revealed by his performance of an act which rendered the Hebrew priesthood no longer necessary. The exercise of the priesthood by the divine head of the christian church began by the great sacrifice of atonement, in which were fulfilled all the typical bloody sacrifices which had so long been offered by the house of Aaron, with whose prerogatives, so long as they continued valid, the functions of our Saviour's priest-

hood were not intended to interfere. And unto the validity of this priesthood, so peculiar, so exalted, so holy, and which was filled by so glorious a Person, the ordaining influence of the blessed Spirit was considered by divine wisdom to be necessary. Our Lord appeared not in his public character, either of prophet or of priest, until He had been solemnly ordained by the Holy Ghost in the manner which is recorded in the two first verses of the text.

We may regard this unction by the blessed Spirit as the origin of the christian ministry, which was thus prepared to supersede that of the Hebrew priesthood, so solemnly appointed by the Almighty, and so jealously separated during a long succession of ages, for the purpose of keeping up a memorial upon earth of the great atonement about to be effected for man's salvation, and of performing an act of faith in that great expected deliverance from sin and spiritual death. But when the reality appeared, the necessity for

type and figure ceased. When the great atoning sacrifice was offered on the cross, the sacrifices which had been offered in the temple became unnecessary ; when the great High Priest of the christian church had assumed his functions, those of the Hebrew priesthood, which represented Him by type and figure, were ended. Thus we find that up to the moment of our Saviour's crucifixion, the authority of the Jewish church was expressly sanctioned by Him. He omitted not to worship in the temple, and to observe the sacrifices enjoined by the law of Moses. He used the means of grace, and honoured the ministers of religion in their official character. And that he never interfered with the ordinances and ministrations of the tribe which had been originally consecrated to the divine service, is strikingly manifested by the manner in which He ordained the apostles as chief pastors of the christian church. When He first sent forth the twelve, He empowered them to work miracles in proof of the truth of their commission,

which was, to preach that the kingdom of God was at hand, or that the reign of the Gospel was about to commence, the christian church was on the point of being established. But our Lord gave them no power to rule ; He delegated to them no spiritual authority. He gave them no ordination, as christian priests, to minister in sacred things. And the reason of this was, that the communion of christian disciples did not then form a church. It was not until our Lord's crucifixion, that the worship of the law ceased to be binding, the temple services became unnecessary, and the ministration of the priests of the line of Aaron was ended. But the first care of the risen Saviour was to provide for the wants of the infant christian church, which his death had established, by the due appointment of its priesthood. The very day on which He burst asunder the fetters of the grave, He appeared in the midst of his chosen disciples, and performed the solemn act of ordination. As his death extinguished the ancient church, which was

the channel of communication between God and man under the law, the new christian church, which was designed to fulfil this object, even until the end of time, was called into existence by his Resurrection. He met his disconsolate disciples, and standing in the midst of them, He thus commissioned them : “ As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you : and when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost ; whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.” (St. John xx.) This, my brethren, is the sacred commission by which we are authorised to act, and which gives to our acts validity, when we offer up the humble prayer of faith and confession of sin on the part of the people to the Most High, or when we declare God’s purposes of vengeance to the impenitent, and his merciful intentions to those who are sorry for their sins, and resolved to forsake them.

This commission our blessed Lord be-

stowed by means of an outward form, corresponding with that by which He himself had been solemnly ordained for his earthly ministry—the descent of the Holy Ghost. This is an event which has ever been regarded in the church as of the greatest importance ; in proof of which we might even call in the testimony of heretics, for by some classes of them it was so greatly exalted as to be considered the point of union between the divine Messiah and the man Jesus. There is a view sometimes entertained in our own day, which it would perhaps be harsh to accuse of an approximation to the heretical error to which allusion has just been made, but which is extremely prejudicial ; for it tends to obscure our full and clear recognition of the constant union of God Most High with the man Jesus from the moment of his birth, through the sorrows of life, the darkness of death, and the shadowy regions of the separate state, even until his resurrection, and glorious ascension into heaven. Persons who hold this view lose sight of the constant in-

dwelling of the Divine Word, or second Person of the Godhead, in the human nature of our Saviour, and assign the influence of the Holy Ghost, as the cause of the actual manifestations and power of his divinity ; thus, as it were, making the second Person of the Godhead, which Jesus was as well as man, to depend upon the third Person of the Godhead. The adoption of such mistaken views by persons whom we may charitably believe to be pious and well meaning, shows the necessity for strict and well-defined ideas of great doctrinal truths, which are diametrically opposed to the wilful and loose religion of the present day. But while we cannot admit that Emmanuel, or God with us, did in any measure owe his divinity or his power to the unction of the Holy Spirit, we recognize in this unction the first sending forth of that sacred gift which still exists in the christian church, and which imparts to its ministers the validity of their office. The priestly character was thereby openly,

by a visible sign, imparted to Christ, who exercised it by the solemn sacrifice of himself on the cross ; and who, as Great Head of the christian church, communicated it to those to whom He delegated his authority, and to their successors even unto the end. “ Receive ye the Holy Ghost ; go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”

Having thus very shortly endeavoured to trace the existence of the christian ministry through its ordination by Christ Jesus himself after his resurrection, from the ordination of Him for his priestly act, as well as for his prophetic work, by the Holy Ghost, recorded in the two first verses of the text ; let us now direct our attention to the last verse of the text, viz. the first verse of the following chapter ; where He is recorded to have suffered in our stead, and to have repelled all the classes of temptation by which man can

ever be assailed. This brings us to the second head, under which we hope to show that, as the first object of our Lord's advent was to offer a sacrifice for us ; the second object was to identify himself with us in the closest union, whereby we may be enabled to follow the great example which He has set before us.

II. No sooner had our blessed Lord been solemnly consecrated for his public ministry, and received the ordination to the priesthood, which He afterwards exercised by offering himself upon the altar of the cross for our sins, than his vicarious suffering commenced, by his endurance of a series of temptations, which consisted of every class of those by which the human nature can be assailed, which He vouchsafed for our sakes to assume. "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted by the devil." As Christ Jesus suffered death for us, so did He, in like manner, suffer all the evils of life. To a rightly-disposed person the worst evil is alienation from

God, and the danger the most to be dreaded is the seductive influence of sin. It therefore became the great Head of the Church to set an example to his members of temptations overcome, and spiritual victory achieved, in which He will enable them also to share, if they will be faithful in their allegiance to Him, and with sincerity and earnestness desire and pray that they may, by the Divine grace, be inspired with the same mind which was also in Him.

It has been asked, how can the example of our Saviour, who was God as well as man, be proposed as an attainable mark by us, who possess human nature in all its erring imperfection? Our limited capacities cannot reach to a knowledge of the mysteries of grace, any more than to an acquaintance with the secrets of nature, whose effects we daily witness, while its causes are hid. But we know that the Godhead of Christ did not exempt his humanity from physical infirmity and acute suffering, or render his mind inca-

pable of sorrow, joy, or sympathy. It was necessary that the divine partaker of our nature should be, in all things, identified with his creatures, whom He vouchsafed to make his brethren : and, above all, that He should be identified with them in *that*, which, to his faithful disciples, is the cause of the deepest suffering, and of the holiest joy and gratitude : temptation and victory gained over temptation. The words of St. Paul, which we have already quoted, place this in the clearest light ; “ In all things it behoved Him to be made like unto his brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God ; to make reconciliation for the sins of the people : for in that He himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.” (Heb. ii. 17, 18.)

But yet another difficulty has been suggested. Could the same thing, which would be a strong, and, unless it were repelled by divine aid, an irresistible

temptation to our base and impure nature, be a temptation to Him who was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners?—to Him who was predicted to the blessed virgin, as a holy thing about to be born of her? That we may follow an example or derive comfort from a sense of sympathy, there must be some degree of correspondence or similarity between the parties. And assuredly, looking merely at our blessed Lord's humanity, nothing can be more opposite to our degraded nature, soiled with the taint of original sin, and ever prone to fall into actual transgression, than the holy, harmless, undefiled nature of the blessed Jesus. In Him, in order to form a fitting receptacle for the Godhead, the stream of original sin was cut off. A miracle was performed at his birth. The second Person of the Trinity united not himself to a human nature born of mortal parents, but to one formed by the Holy Ghost in a virgin mother. A subject so mysterious and awful ought to be approached with the

lowliest reverence. But if we may venture thus to speculate, we might say, one reason, apparent to us, for the Divine Word not uniting himself with a humanity born in the ordinary course of nature, but with a humanity miraculously formed for the purpose, was to efface the stain of original corruption.

But in this great disparity between the human nature of Christ and that of mankind, which may at first sight seem to present a difficulty, there will be found an admirable fitness. Adam, our first head, was also free from the taint of sin, and came pure and undefiled, by means of a miracle, from the hand of his Maker. Yet he was tempted, and yielded to the temptation, and through him, we, his descendants, have fallen, having inherited from him a nature rebellious against God. Christ, our second Head, the Head of the new or spiritual creation, was sent in order to remedy the fatal effects of the guilt incurred by the unresisted temptation of Adam our first head. That he might in

all things be identified with us, he suffered Himself to be tempted, and resisted the temptation; and in so far as we follow after Him, and, mindful of our baptismal covenant, are his faithful subjects and spiritual sons, we shall be raised, through Him, even to a better condition than that from which the rebellion of our tempted and fallen first head expelled us. "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead; for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (1 Cor. xv.) The nature of our first head, in whom we fell unto death, was very different from that which we have inherited since the fall. Yet he was tempted as we are tempted, and was vanquished by the temptation. The human nature of our second head, in whom we are called to rise to life everlasting, was indeed very different from that which we have inherited, yet our temptations may be conceived to have been temptations to Him also, as they were to Adam. Yet He

overcame the temptation, and, by doing so, He gave us a pledge that if we put our trust in Him, as we are invited to do, his victory shall also be ours.

“ Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil.” Satan knew that his empire, so long usurped, was now assailed by one more powerful than himself. “ When a strong armed men keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace, but when a stronger than he shall come upon him and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth the spoils.” (St. Luke xi. 21.) And he armed himself with all the power of darkness to oppose the work of grace, and, if possible, to render the designs of Almighty mercy abortive. He, who had at first intruded into the sacred precincts of paradise, to tempt and to ruin the original parents of mankind, could not, without the bitterness of malicious sorrow, behold the misery which he had inflicted on man remedied, and the guilt which he had caused atoned for by the seed of the

woman, who, in the earliest prophecy, was promised to bruise the serpent's head. Satan well knew the nature of the holy errand, on which the coequal Son of the everlasting Father had descended from the throne of heaven. He felt that the earth, which, since the fall of man, had been his peculiar domain, was now invaded by a mightier than himself, who should spoil him of his prey, and make an open show of his triumph. When the Almighty pronounced a curse upon Satan at the gate of paradise, He declared, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." (Gen. iii.) The fulness of time was now come. The mysterious struggle, which had in these words been predicted, was now about to take place. The prophecy was hastening towards its accomplishment. The seed of the woman had been born. Christ Jesus had entered the world, conceived by a miracle, and born of a virgin mother. His public ministry was commenced, and

was speedily to lead to the great atoning sacrifice, for which He had just received the priestly ordination of the Holy Ghost. In this sacrifice, the head of the serpent was to be bruised, or the power of Satan was to be crushed, and the strong armed tyrant of our souls was to be deprived of his spoil. But in the conflict, the woman's holy seed was to be bruised in his heel, or his lower part. Our Saviour's human nature was to be bowed down in death. Christ Jesus was come in order to spoil the principalities and powers of darkness, and Satan had prepared himself for the struggle. That Almighty Being, from whom he had revolted, was now come in mercy to the earth, in order to proclaim liberty to the captives of sin, and to open the prison of spiritual darkness to them that were bound, and to proclaim the acceptable year of redemption of the Lord. These gracious designs of salvation to our race, Satan made haste to traverse. He assailed the holy seed of the woman, with those temptations

which he had successfully applied to our first parents in their state of original innocence; and he hoped to be successful, by attacking our Lord with all the allurements, and by surrounding him with all the snares, which he knew by experience it was impossible for mere human nature to resist.

Here a difficulty naturally strikes us. How could Satan expect to be victorious in the struggle? If he knew that Christ was seed of the woman, did he not also know that He was equally God Most High? If he knew that in the conflict, his heel or human nature was to be bruised, did he not also know that his own head or supremacy was to be crushed? These questions I would answer by another question. Did not Satan first of all raise the standard of revolt against the Lord of heaven? and how could he then expect—a finite being—to cope with Omnipotence? The same arrogant presumption which instigated his original rebellion, led him on with renewed hope once

more to assail his Almighty conqueror, when the Deity was united to a humanity over which he had gained so many fatal triumphs.

In this mysterious struggle between the destroyer and the Saviour of our race, the tempter assailed our Lord with every class of temptation to which human nature is liable. And He for our sakes submitted to be thus tempted, and for us He gained the victory, if we, as living members of Him our glorious Head, will do as we were exhorted to do, when we received our spiritual life, at our first entrance into his church: "not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, but manfully fight under his banner against sin, the world, and the devil, and continue Christ's faithful soldiers and servants unto our lives' end."

Every one of the temptations by which we are so often seduced from our allegiance to God may be classed under the threefold division which divine wisdom has pointed out. "If any one love the

world," saith St. John, "the love of the Father is not in him: for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world; and the world passeth away and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." (1 John ii.) The lusts of the flesh, or desire to gratify the animal feelings of our nature, the lust of the eye, or covetousness and avarice, and the pride of life, or vanity and love of fame and distinction, are the rocks among which we are apt to make shipwreck of our souls. And these three snares Satan held out to our blessed Lord.

"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil; and when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterwards an hungered." Our Lord suffered being tempted. In proportion to his perfect holiness, his soul was the more distressed by the detestable suggestions of the enemy: and that which preserved it from defilement,

subjected it to bitter pain. But to this he willingly submitted, in order that, from his own experience, he might have a feeling of sympathy with his people under their sufferings from temptation, and be able to succour them. It is probable that Satan renewed his temptations, from time to time, during the whole forty days, continually interrupting Christ's holy meditations with his hateful suggestions. After this long period, his appetite of hunger returned, in a desert place, where no sustenance could be had by ordinary means. Satan turned these circumstances to account by tempting our Lord to gratify the animal desires of nature. "When the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command these stones to be made bread;" thus proposing to Him who was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, a gratification of the flesh which was in itself quite innocent. In the disguise of a pleasing form, and with the false words of friendship, the adversary

endeavoured to instil fleshly desires, mingled with distrust in Divine Providence, into the Holy One of God. The apparently reasonable and moderate nature of the suggestion shows the subtlety of the tempter. He did not urge our Lord to create a feast in order to indulge sensuality, but only to change a stone into bread for his necessity, and to show thereby that he was indeed the Son of God. What, he would say, art thou the beloved Son of God, and left in this wilderness to languish even unto death? Is this the Father's love? Expect no longer from his bounty a supply which has been already too long delayed. If thou be indeed the Christ, exert the power which is inherent in thee, by commanding these stones to become bread. But it was necessary that Christ should fulfil all righteousness, and therefore his miraculous power was always used solely to advance the purposes of his descent in the flesh; viz. to confirm his authority, mission, and doctrine, to honour the Father, and to

benefit mankind ; and it was never once exerted in order to accommodate or relieve himself. He therefore repelled the temptation in a way which, were we to follow it, we should find to be the most efficacious. “ He answered and said, It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that cometh out of the mouth of God.”

Let us treasure in our hearts these memorable words. When we are tempted to sin, let us remember that the advantage or gratification of a moment is not all that we have to consider ; but the words of God the divine Son who forbids us thus to sin, and who, if we obey, will lead us to everlasting life : “ Shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God ?” But something more than this is here implied. We must not put even innocent and useful things in competition with the love of God ; and whenever our most necessary worldly interests endanger the loss or diminution of the divine empire over our hearts, they must without

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hesitation be sacrificed. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." All the great, and the good, and the pleasant things of earth must be left behind us, when we obey the summons of death, and must perish in the wreck of the world. All things conducive to our worldly comfort may well be called bread, which is the staff of our animal life. But as bread is perishable, so are they. The dying man loathes the most delicate food. The dying eye cannot be pleased with the ample stores of the harvest-fields or pastures, or with the treasures of hoarded riches. The dying mind ceases to be gratified with the incense of praise or of fame. The dying heart feels that it must soon cease to beat even for the objects of tender affection, to which it still fondly clings in its last pulses. All must be swept away at the approach of stern, pitiless death. Immortal man shall not live by bread. By what, then, shall he live? By the word

of God, which endureth for ever, the glad tidings of eternal life, the news of immortality brought to light by Christ Jesus our Lord ; while “ all flesh is as grass, and the glory of man is as the flower of grass ; the grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away : the word of the Lord endureth for ever.” 1 Peter i. 24. While the treasures of this world are scattered to the winds, or buried in the dust, the word of God offers to us treasures which neither moth nor rust shall corrupt ; an everlasting crown, a heavenly kingdom. While the fame of worldly renown is soon forgotten, the word of God offers to us, if we be wise, “ to shine in the brightness of the firmament, and to be as the stars for ever and ever.” (Dan. xii.)

“ Then the devil taketh him up to the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down, for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in

their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." Here Satan tempted our Lord to indulge in the pride of life, to gratify vanity, ambition, and love of distinguished pre-eminence ; to cause a miracle to be wrought in order to further an empty ostentatious display, to make an open manifestation of divine power in the midst of Jerusalem, on the very summit of the temple, and before the face of the wondering world. As our Lord had repelled his former temptation with words from Scripture, the devil now enforced his present suggestion with the same authority, quoting the words of David : " He shall give his angels charge over thee ; they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." But in quoting Scripture, Satan garbled it. He omitted that which gives full force to the expression, " He shall give his angels charge over thee, *to keep thee in all thy ways ;*" well knowing that ostentatiously to cast him-

self from the temple's battlement was not one of the ways marked out for Christ, any more than a vain-glorious display is a way in which any of Christ's disciples ought to follow. Satan strove to induce our Lord to make an unwarranted demand for the influence of miraculous power in his favour, and to lay claim to the adoration of the people as their expected Messiah, before the hour was fully come, and in a way which would have substituted a glorious earthly triumph for the agony and cruel mockery of the cross. Had this temptation been complied with, Satan's triumph would indeed have been complete ; the heel of the woman's seed would not have been wounded, and the head of sin would not have been crushed. But our Saviour again resisted him, using the words of ancient inspiration : " It is written, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." These words had a two-fold application. They contained a refusal of Satan's proposal, upon the general ground of the guilt of tempting God,

which Christ, the God-man, would not in his human nature incur. They also contain a reproof to Satan for daring thus to offer a temptation to his God. For Satan, a created angel, was as much the work of the hands of the Son of God, as are all the hosts of heaven, and nations of the earth, the universe and all that it contains. And Christ, though then enveloped in human form, was not less God than when he appeared in the clouds and lightnings of Mount Sinai, or when he first called the world out of nothing.

The snares of the devil are innumerable, and by throwing temptations of this nature in the way of some persons, he obtains a triumph which could not be achieved by any other mode of attack. Some minds, of a noble, lofty character, detest the grosser sensualities of vice, despise the sordid selfishness of luxury, while others are too restless to settle down in the enjoyment of worldly gain, or in the bonds of ordinary engagements. A man of such a character would fly

with loathing from the bait with which Satan hooks the unclean and intemperate; he would look with contempt upon the plodding cares of the industrious worldling, and he would smile with scorn at the volatile existence of the frivolous hunter of vain pleasure. Satan could not hope to induce him to worship any of these as an idol. He accordingly tempts him with vanity of his own fancied excellence, and pride of intellect, which is the snare of the learned, wise, and philosophic, as physical indulgence is the snare of the gross and vulgar-minded. But let the proud, the ambitious, the vain-glorious lay to heart the words of our Saviour, when their ever-craving and never-satisfied desires are soaring in quest of gratification. Let them remember that when they seek, exclusively or principally, the praise, the wonder, the respect, and the obedience of their fellow-men, or when they indulge in deep and lofty speculations as to things too hard for them to know, they are tempting

God to abandon them, as a punishment of presumption, to spiritual misery and everlasting death.

Satan, thus baffled, made one more attempt to seduce our Lord's human nature from his great mediatorial work, by means of the lust of the eye, covetousness, love of wealth and power. "Satan taketh him up to an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, and saith unto Him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." Here the lord of this world proposed to dispense his gifts with lavish profusion. But the stake was a mighty one, and merited his utmost efforts. Could he have induced the Holy One destined to destroy his power, to have become the first of his servants, his earthly vicegerent, that power would, he hoped, be rivetted eternally. We may imagine that the powers of the prince of the air and lord of this world were stretched to their utmost to dazzle the eye of our Saviour

with the most tempting splendour. All the kingdoms of the world were made to pass in review before Him. He saw Rome the mistress of the earth, and the princely Palatine with its boundless palace. The lord of that palace was pointed out as an object of envy; but the pure soul of Jesus rejected its splendour, and would not purchase its possession. The glories of the King of kings, with his bands of attending satraps, and the fulness of his eastern pomp, were, in like manner, displayed in vain. We may suppose that the great, and the mighty, and the glorious things of earth were all collected in order to win the prize of Christ's allegiance.

But our blessed Lord, having endured the trials which for our sake He had consented to bear, raised his voice of authority to the tempter, and dismissed him from his presence with a sentence of Holy Writ, which must have sounded as his anathema, and which may divine grace make our example and encouragement in well-doing. "Get thee

hence, Satan ; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." It is owing to what our blessed Lord suffered during his temptation in the desert, during his agony in the garden, and during his passion on Mount Calvary, that this blessed Word of divine instruction is ever obeyed, or that it will one day be universally obeyed by the sons of men. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." Thanks be to our Saviour's power and mercy, the Lord alone shall one day be worshipped by the children of our race. And Satan, now bruised, will then be broken and cast into the lake of fire. Let us, in as far as we personally are concerned, and in as far as our influence extends, anticipate that blessed time when there shall be a new heaven and a new earth, and sorrow and sin shall be done away. This we may accomplish, if we will serve the Lord faithfully, and be looking for, and hastening unto, the day of his coming ;

trimming our lamps like the wise virgins, and waiting in expectation of the advent of Him who appeared once to suffer and to die for us, and who will appear again to triumph gloriously and completely over his and our enemy, to destroy that power of sin finally, which He has already dethroned, and to reign over his people as their Lord and their God.

Let us ever remember that a man is not profited if he gain even the whole world at the expense of his soul; and that he can receive no equivalent, in the most lavish profusion of temporal blessings, for the misery which will be felt eternally by every one who has worshipped mammon rather than God, and who has loved the world, and the things of the world, more than the service of our heavenly Father. The kingdoms of the world and all their glory were set before our blessed Saviour; and a similar temptation is presented to each one of us, according to our position, tastes, and circumstances. It matters not what the

worldly prize may be which is offered to us at the expense of our soul ; we must resist the enemy of man in the strength of the Lord, and in the power of his might, saying, “ Get thee hence, Satan ; it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.”

Let me, in conclusion, once more use the most appropriate words of St. John, which I earnestly pray that the blessed Spirit may impress upon your minds.

“ If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him ; for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world : and the world passeth away, and the lust thereof ; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”—Amen.

SERMON III.

CHRIST FOUNDS HIS CHURCH.

ST. JOHN XX. 21, 22, 23.

“ Then said Jesus unto them again, Peace be unto you : as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.”

SIN had no sooner entered into the world, than our offended but merciful God provided for man a remedy. The curse of banishment and death had indeed gone forth against him, but the blessing of reconciliation was held out to

him as the object of hope ; and even before his expulsion from the garden of Eden, he was saved from despair, by the sure word of promise, given to cheer him during a life of laborious wandering, and to animate him with the prospect of everlasting blessedness. The divine curse, pronounced against the serpent or principle of evil, contained the promise of blessing to weak and fallen man.

Thus, from the commencement of our race, that heavenly light, in the brightness of which we rejoice, supported and consoled the faithful children of God under every trial and temptation, teaching them that “ neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers,” should “ be able to separate ” them “ from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.” (Rom. viii. 38.) This love for man, which has been fully manifested, under the christian dispensation, by the incarnation and death of the Son of God, was revealed by the oldest of all prophecies, one delivered even before expulsion from

paradise had punished the sin of rebellion. "And I will put enmity," said God, to the serpent, or principle of evil, "between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." (Gen. iii. 15.) Here was a promise of Christ the Saviour, who, in an especial manner, was seed of the woman; being the miraculously-born Son of a Virgin Mother. He has bruised the head of the serpent, by destroying the empire of Satan, and delivering man from the bondage of sin. But in effecting this victory, He was himself bruised in his inferior or human nature, as was denoted by the heel, the lowest part of man's body.

The consummation of this promise was eagerly wished for by patriarchs, prophets, and great men of old, who desired to see the things which are clearly revealed to us, but saw them only darkly and dimly, as through a glass. And the gradual advancement of divine light, by the word of promise and the voice of pro-

phesy, served to guide the faithful under the Patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations, as the morning twilight leads on the traveller, who is called to perform his journey before the rising of the sun. The Sun of Righteousness himself thus congratulated the believers of his time on their superior spiritual light : “ Blessed are your eyes, for they see ; and your ears, for they hear. For verily, I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them ; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.” (St. Matt. xiii. 16, 17.) To see the things of God with the eye of faith, and to hear the glad tidings of the Gospel unto salvation, is the Christian’s privilege. To him who is a Christian in name only, and who does not avail himself of this privilege, the blessing is turned into a curse, and he becomes a partaker of the woe which our Lord denounced against the unbelievers of his time. “ Woe unto thee,

Chorazin ! woe unto thee, Bethsaida ! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes." (St. Luke x.) The kingdom of God is come nigh unto us, and if we enter not therein, it shall be more tolerable for Sodom in the day of judgment than for us. Our light is bright, and our privileges are distinguished, and if we shut our eyes to the light, and prefer the vain or the sinful things of the world to the privilege of being the reconciled sons of God, our fate will be a thousandfold more terrible than that of those who have sinned in ignorance of the truth, or with a less perfect revelation of the divine will.

When the Spirit of God first convinces us of sin, and reveals to us the awful holiness of Him whom we have offended, we begin almost to doubt whether God, who is so pure and so just, can regard with mercy a creature so impure and unrighteous as man. Can pardon be sought

by a sorrowing and confessing sinner from a glorious and holy God? Can there be between them any point of union? Would not their meeting be one of consuming destruction? Such dismal forebodings are dispelled by our knowledge of the mercy of God, that attribute which is dwelt upon in the Scriptures beyond every other. This mercy is manifested by the pardon of sinners in a way not inconsistent with the other divine attributes of holiness and justice; but in one which enhances these, while it gives exercise to the most boundless overflowing of Almighty compassion. "When we were yet without strength," says St. Paul, (Rom. v.) "in due time Christ died for the ungodly. God commended his love for us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." God beheld us in hopeless misery, and He gave his coequal Son, in order that, by suffering in our stead, He might atone to his justice for our sins, and by offering himself up as a sacrifice for us,

He might, by his death, procure for us deliverance from the sentence of eternal condemnation.

Thus it is neither sorrow nor confession that procures our pardon ; for, although Christ had not died for us, it may be conceived that we might have sorrowed and confessed, and yet done both to no purpose. Our pardon is procured by One high above us, and in a way infinitely transcending our own efforts. Our part is implicitly to believe that Christ Jesus died to save us, and humbly to receive the benefits of his death. And this belief will produce in us sorrow, confession, and the blessed fruits of good works, without which there can be no true faith, and without which the benefits of our Saviour's death cannot reach us. In matters of religion, we must ever be careful to trace effects to their proper causes ; for if we ascribe pardon to our repentance as a procuring cause, we shall trust to ourselves, and not to Christ, and

thus lose the benefit which can only reach us through Him.

But as we are not placed in this world to serve God, each believer apart, but rather as a co-operative society of Christian fellowship, our condition must be considered in relation to that religious communion of which we are members. The pardoned sinner, who is no longer a stranger to God, is made a "fellow citizen with the saints, and is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple to the Lord." (Ephes. ii.) Doubtless, a man may be made wise unto salvation by the immediate teaching of the Holy Spirit, without the intervention of any secondary cause. And as it is possible that he may have thus been brought into a state of grace, it may be conceived to be also possible for him to be kept therein, without the agency of

man. Yet such is not the usual method of God's dealings with his creatures. He wills that one shall be instrumental to the salvation of another, and that all shall serve Him as members of a Christian community. So that it is no satisfactory answer to his conscience, for a man who neglects christian ordinances, and rejects christian fellowship, to attempt to justify himself by the consideration that he prays, and reads, and meditates at home. He transgresses, by forsaking the assembling together of Christians, by despising the example of the apostles, who met together for religious purposes on the first day of the week, by neglecting the spiritual nourishment of the body and blood of Christ, by which his nature, regenerated at baptism, requires to be constantly fed ; and by lightly esteeming the ministerial office of the christian priesthood, which God has set apart to be the peculiar channel of communication between himself and his creatures.

That all things might be done decently

and in order in the christian community, our Lord appointed a body of men to form, as it were, the connecting link between heaven and earth, to declare and to explain God's law to the people, and to offer up to God their prayers and confessions. "Let a man so account of us," says St. Paul of himself and his brethren, in the holy office, "as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God." (1 Cor. iv. 1.) And in delivering the message with which he was charged by his heavenly Master to man, "We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God," he gives his authority for so doing; "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us." (2 Cor. v. 20.) God might, if it so pleased Him, deal with each one of his creatures by himself apart; but as this is not the way in which his wisdom has thought proper to act, it is our interest, no less than our duty, to acquiesce in the method of the Divine appointment; and to receive the message

of salvation through the regular means of the christian ministry, the successors of the apostles, who are authorized by God to be the shepherds of his flock, leading them to the green pastures and still waters of eternal life ; the stewards of his household, dividing rightly to every one his portion in due season.

This sacred trust of ministering between the Creator and his creatures has never been of man's appointment under any of the successive developements of the right worship of God upon the earth. Under the patriarchal dispensation, we know that the first-born, or head of a house, was set apart to offer up the family sacrifice upon the domestic altar. It was this priestly primogeniture which Esau sold with sinful lightness to his younger brother ; though, in his case, the fault was deeply aggravated by want of faith, surrendering, as he did, the honour of transmitting the seed promised to his ancestor Abraham, in whom all generations of the earth should be blessed, which was at-

tached to the priesthood in his family. Among the institutions of the theocratic government of the Jews, that which was preserved by the divine command with the most jealous care was the priesthood. "No man taketh this honour unto himself," says St. Paul; "but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." (Hebrews v. 4.) And although God declared to the Hebrew people in general, that they should be to him a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, (Exodus xix. 6,) yet we find that he visited with the direst vengeance those who perverted these words to the disparagement of his ministers, rebelling against Moses and Aaron, and saying, "Ye take too much upon ye, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them." (Numbers xvi.)

It is proposed, with the Divine blessing, to show from the words of the text, that, in the institution of the christian church, the Almighty has not deviated from the course which he vouchsafed to

pursue during the patriarchal and legal dispensations, which were its precursors; and that this office is even now as little of man's appointment, as it was, when the glory of the Lord rested upon the tabernacle, or filled the temple. And though, to the christian church in general, those words of St. Peter are applied; "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people;" (1 St. Peter ii. 9;) they no more preclude the divine authority of a body of men, who take not this honour unto themselves, but are called of God, than did similar expressions, used of the Jews by the Almighty himself, secularize the house of Aaron, or raise the whole people to an equal spiritual authority. And let it not be thought that the matter is unimportant, or that it involves a question of curiosity, rather than of utility. It is not enough that the Gospel should be preached to us. It must be conveyed to us in the way of the divine appointment. And the preaching of the Gospel,

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as it is expressed by our Lord's apostles, does not mean public teaching only ; it implies the inculcation of the christian system, in which the sacraments principally, and all other ordinances, are included. And whether it be for preaching according to our more restricted acceptance of the word, or for the administration of ordinances, the strict observance of the method of the divine appointment is necessary, in order to give to them authority and validity. For though God may have vouchsafed to convert sinful individuals to himself by the inward influence of his Spirit, and with little apparent aid of outward means, yet it cannot be expected that he will bless a systematic disregard of his own rules, or a deviation from the channel through which He has appointed that the dew of his blessing shall descend upon his people.

The two first verses of the text naturally lead us to the consideration of the first establishment of the christian church, and the appointment of its ministers.

“As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” While the last verse leads us to the consideration of the power by which the sacred office of the ministry is accompanied; “Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.” These two subjects embrace matter of such extent and importance, that it will be necessary, on the present occasion, to confine our attention to the first of them.

But in dismissing the second division of the subject from our actual consideration, I must not omit to remark, that due attention to it would lead us to distinguish between the just and legitimate authority of the christian church, and the monstrous usurpation exercised by the erring Romish branch of that church. On the one hand, we have the lawful use, and on the other hand the terrible abuse. And the place maintained by our Church

is the middle way between the unscriptural extremes of Romish tyranny and puritanical laxity. We lord it not over God's heritage; but we insist that all things shall be done decently and in order. At the same time, it would be deceiving ourselves, were we to imagine that our branch of the church practically enjoyed that power which our Lord delegated to the christian church for the benefit of her sons. The commission which we have received is, "Whosoever sins ye remit, shall be remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain shall be retained;" and as we fall short of the full execution of that commission, we fail in producing the spiritual effect by which our ministrations would otherwise be blessed. This is acknowledged in the services of our church, where allusion is made to a godly discipline, a salutary exercise of authority in primitive times, which is now dormant, and of which the restoration is greatly to be desired. It is to the want of this discipline that we

may mainly attribute the great prevalence of schism among us in times past, as well as the low state of religion among many of us at present, and the apparent inconsistencies which, in some things, exist between the theory and the practice of our system.

A temporising and timid line of conduct on the part of the church gives encouragement to her enemies to presume upon her moderation, which they conceive to be weakness. And those who have separated from us learn to scorn us, as incapable of using the authority with which our Lord invested us, because we have suffered it to lie dormant. The immediate effect of the resumption by us of the power of ecclesiastical censure, would be to draw the lines of purity and of godly discipline tighter around the walls of our Zion, to strike terror among the hosts of her blasphemers, and to bring her enemies, humbled to her gates, suing for admission. Among those within our pale, the effect would be equally salutary. An increased respect for our church and

dread of her censure would act as a wholesome moral restraint on the lives of those, whose hearts and consciences were not swayed by a higher motive ; the standard of conduct amongst us would be elevated, and, ere long, the censure which, at first, was dreaded as a note of infamy, would no longer be needed by contrite and humbled hearts. But even were a contrary effect to ensue from the restoration of godly discipline in our church to anything that we have supposed, or have reason to expect ; were those who have separated from us, to be thereby, still further removed from us ; and were many of our low-minded and lukewarm sons to be repelled by our righteous severity, and led into the arms of loose and ungodly schism ; we are not on that account to lower our heavenly standard to the level of the impure and sordid wills of men. We are not to alloy the virgin ore with baser metal, in order that it may subserve the purposes of vanity and sin. We are not to invalidate the divine appointment, be-

cause it is too great and too holy for base and impure man to bear. We are not to silence the word of God, and fetter his church, because that word denounces the evil ways of sinners, and that church uses against them the authority which his word commands.

By the working of our present system, some of our holiest services are made a by-word among our ungodly enemies, and are a stone of stumbling to our timid and ignorant friends. How often are we not shocked at the administration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, by the presence of persons whose unholy life has not been publicly acknowledged, and of whose repentance even the most lenient could not affirm a well-grounded belief? How often do not our officiating ministers thank God for the departure into the land, where there is no longer "any work or device," of unholy souls, whom charity itself cannot account fit to enter his presence; and affirm a sure and certain hope of a resurrection unto

eternal life, concerning those whose portion must be with them who "rise to shame and everlasting contempt?" And how often, at the holy sacrament of baptism, do not those stand sponsors to the child about to be regenerated, whose lives and conduct prove that they have neither part nor lot in the kingdom and church of Christ? These inconsistencies and others, to mention which here, time would fail me, have led many superficial and unthinking persons to wish to have our services altered, in order to be conformed to the corrupt and low standard of conduct amongst us. While the apprehension of them, as glaring and discreditable, ought rather to lead to the restoration of that higher rule of christian life which our Lord has delivered as his Law, and which He has entrusted us with powers to enforce. The Law of God and the Church of God must not be lowered to suit the baseness and sinfulness of man. His nature must, on the contrary, be raised,

so as to obey the law of God, and to fulfil the part which he has to act as a member of his church.

At baptism, we are made members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. And then we undertake new duties, enter upon new responsibilities, and stand in a new and widely-different relation to God, than we did in our natural state. Being made members of Christ and inheritors of God's kingdom, we are entitled, as the rights of the new birth, to all the privileges of Christians: and as long as we do not prove our unworthiness to enjoy those privileges, and renounce our birthright by presumptuous sin, we have a valid claim to demand them, and no man may withhold them from us, because of any fancied unfitness, of which his fallible judgment may accuse us. But if we be guilty of scandal, are we still to remain as blots on the fair face of the spouse of Christ? By no means. Our Lord has provided a remedy, when He said to the

rulers of his Church, "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." Let the Church do her duty, in cutting off from her communion those who give cause for offence and scandal, and then we shall hear no more of the profanation of the altar of the Lord by unworthy communicants, or of the appointment of godless sponsors for the sake of interest, vanity, or convenience, or of the solemn mockery which seems to flatter, even at the brink of the grave, the memory of the reprobate with the hope of a blessed immortality.

Having thus adverted to our own want of discipline as a grievous imperfection in the working of our system, and one which paralyzes all our godly energies; but which is so little inherent in it, that a strict observance of excommunication and public penitence would tend immeasurably to raise our standard within our own pale, and gradually to increase our influence, by adding to us many from without; let

us now turn to the more proper subject of this day's sermon, which is, to consider the first establishment of the christian church, and the appointment of the christian ministry. And here, let us, in the first place, consider the facts; and, in the second place, the nature of that establishment and appointment.

I. Let us consider the facts of the appointment of the christian ministry.

The priesthood, as well under the patriarchal dispensation, as under that of the law, was neither of human choice nor of human appointment. During the former, the eldest of each family was the minister of sacred things; and when an immediate theocracy was introduced under the latter, one distinguished race was selected, the successive generations of which enjoyed the sacred and honourable privilege of offering up the prayers and the sacrifices of the people to God, and of making an atonement for them, as a type of the future sacrifice of Emmanuel.

This priesthood was strictly confined to the house of Aaron, and might not be interfered with; and in it, the line of family succession was preserved unbroken, even unto the end of the existence of the Hebrew church, although there were several interruptions to its regular order. As in the case of the substitution of the Asmonæan branch for the more direct representative of the house, in the troublous times of Antiochus, and in that of the arbitrary appointments and frequent changes in the high priestly dignity, in our Saviour's own day, according to the will of the usurping kings of the family of Herod. But when God came down and dwelt on earth in the form of man, He respected his own ordinance, and never sanctioned the slightest interference with the divinely-appointed order. On the contrary, during his whole life, He conformed strictly to the institutions of the Mosaic code. And, though his omniscience detected the unworthiness of the majority of the priests to offer up the

holy sacrifice to the Lord of hosts, or to raise their hands to Him in prayer within his sacred temple, He did not, on that account, refuse to honour the divine institution, or desert the temple, or deny the validity of the priestly office. He did not retire with the small spiritually-minded band who resorted to Him, and, abhorring the contact of the hypocritical Pharisee, and denying the ministrations of the worldly priests, form a pure and holy communion apart from the carnal and profane. On the contrary, He regularly resorted, in company with his followers, to the temple. He partook of the rites, observed the ceremonies, and acknowledged the validity of the ministers of the Church; and by their hands He allowed his offerings to be presented on the altar, although He foresaw that they were soon to assist in nailing Him to the cross.

The reason of this conduct was, that, during the personal ministry of our Lord, the Hebrew church was the accredited

channel of intercourse between God and man. In the divine economy, altar is never raised against altar, and two separate churches cannot have a simultaneous being. Manifold branches of the same church may co-exist, and even have considerable points of difference; but, in the history of the world, we find only three dispensations of the true religion; the Patriarchal, the Mosaic, and the Christian; and these were successive, and never clashed, the one against the other, in prerogative or jurisdiction. Our object in this part of the discourse, is to show when the second of these dispensations ended, and the third commenced. But it may not be improper here to advert shortly to the termination of the first, and the origin of the second. In the patriarchal church, the priesthood was as little of man's devising, or of man's choice, as under the law or the Gospel. The first-born of the family, the head of the race, ministered to God, in sacred things, at the household altar. And this

priestly primogeniture seems to have obtained during the early ages of the world, while the patriarchal worship continued primitive and pure.

In the earlier portions of the sacred narrative, we meet with many true worshippers of God, who were admitted to a high degree of the divine favour, and who yet were not numbered among his chosen people of the legal covenant. I will not speak of those who lived before that covenant was made, such as Melchisedec, Abimelek, or Lot; but of those whose times bordered upon that of the early history of the Hebrews. In the case of Job, Jethro, and the Rechabites, we are not to suppose that we have instances of a worship acceptable to God, but opposing or dissenting from the Mosaic dispensation. In them, we perceive the remnants of the ancient patriarchal church, of which the extinction cannot be traced by us; but which we may imagine to have existed, here and there, contemporaneously with the Hebrew po-

lity, which was in its nature and design exclusive and limited; and then gradually to have merged in the prevailing corruptions of idolatry which overspread the earth. It would be an entirely false view to consider the ancient true worshippers of God, who existed during the Hebrew dispensation, but were not under it, as belonging to the same class with modern separatists, who profess to worship God, after having abandoned the union of his Church; for they were the remnants of an earlier church, to which the knowledge of the true God was revealed, by which it was long preserved, and upon which a system of further revelation was superinduced. The patriarchal church was the base of the pillar, to which the Jewish formed the leading shaft, which has been crowned by the christian church as the capital.

A more fitting similarity will be found between modern separatists from the church catholic, and the schismatic ten tribes who continued to worship the true

God, though under an unhallowed form and with unlawful rites. The sin of Jeroboam was schism, a sin from which even those kings of Israel did not depart, who showed much zeal against idolatry. We know that Jehu departed not from the sin of the son of Nebat; for though he had purged the land from foreign idolatry, it would not have suited his political purposes to have abandoned schism, and worshipped the true God in his Church. And among the seven thousand whom the Lord commends for not having bowed the knee to Baal, it is yet possible that, as Israelites, many of them had worshipped the God of their fathers in schism, at Dan and Bethel, instead of entering within the pale of his Church at Jerusalem. In the very different destinies which have hitherto been assigned to the two subdivisions of the stock of Israel, we can trace the punishments of their respective crimes. The ten tribes were guilty of the sin of schism; and, as is the case with all

schismatics, their religion fell, by an easy transition, into the grossest and falsest corruption. They have been miserably punished by a total extinction of nationality, by being blotted out from among the people, by losing their place among the races of the earth. The two tribes, on the other hand, continuing, on the whole, as a nation, orthodox members of God's Church, did indeed fall into frequent errors and corruptions, mainly, as we have reason to believe, through the seductions of their schismatic brethren, and for these, they received the chastisement of a temporary loss of national government. After centuries of re-establishment, the fearful crime of which they became guilty, in crucifying the Son of God, merited and has received the heavy and enduring punishment of the curse of the Almighty. Yet their nationality still remains, and affords consolation to the devout Jew, amid contempt and persecution in the lands of their exile. This one bright spot in the midst of their many

sorrows is a reward for their abhorrence of the sin of schism ; and we may believe that some distinction will continue to be their peculiar portion, even after the whole seed of Israel shall have been restored to their place, as faithful servants of a reconciled God.

But before our Lord planted the christian church by the side of his cross on Mount Calvary, he made provision for its continued existence, even unto the end of time. He selected two bodies of men, unto whom he respectively delegated certain commissions. He appointed twelve, to whom was given the name of apostles, derived from the way in which they were employed. These were men who, with the exception of the traitor Judas, had their hearts turned to God by the sanctifying influence of the Holy Ghost ; and when our Saviour sent them forth, he bestowed upon them a degree of the miraculous influence of the same Spirit. “ And when Jesus had called unto him the twelve disciples, he

gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease. These he sent forth, and commanded them, As ye go, preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (St. Matt. x.) In this appointment we can perceive no trace of ministerial authority. They had holy doctrines to inculcate, and glad tidings to relate of the advent of Emmanuel upon earth ; and in order that their divine commission might be proved by evidence, they had power granted them to work miracles in attestation of its truth. But they had no power to rule. And, in like manner, the commission which he entrusted to the seventy disciples whom he sent, two and two, before his " face into every city and place whither he himself would come," was merely preparatory to the future establishment of the Church. In this spiritual kingdom these two classes of his disciples were destined, in due time, with authority to minister ; the twelve receiv-

ing the ordaining influence of the Holy Ghost, which constituted them chief rulers in the Church, and the seventy, as there is every reason to believe, taking the second place under them in the sacred ministry.

And for the absence of all ecclesiastical authority on the part of the apostles and disciples, the reason was, that then there was no Church in which they could rule ; for that of the Jews still existed in full validity, while that of the new covenant was as yet future. As long as our blessed Lord continued his personal ministry, and until he exclaimed from the cross, "It is finished," the Jewish Church was the only divinely-appointed channel of intercourse between earth and heaven, and the priests of the race of Aaron were the only divinely-appointed ministers, authorized to offer, by sacrifice and oblation, the homage of the people to the Most High, and to declare to the people the will of the Almighty. During our Saviour's life, it would have been unlaw-

ful for one of his apostles to present the offering upon the altar, or to cause the smoke of the sacrifice to fill the courts of the temple. The only church was the Jewish, and if they had refused to conform to it, they would have been guilty of the sin of schism. The christian Church did not exist as a rival to the Jewish, but was its successor; being founded by the side of the cross on Mount Calvary, where the dying groans of the Saviour put an end to the ancient institutions of the law. Then, all the sacrifices, rites, and ceremonies of old time were done away; for they were either types of the great atonement on the cross, or had respect unto it: and when the reality appeared, the figure vanished. The ancient priesthood of the house of Aaron ceased to command the veneration of the christian disciple, whose head was now a great and divine High Priest, who, having entered within the veil, and ascended on high, into the heavenly holy of holies, no longer required to be represented

by the high priest in the earthly temple. When the Lord of life expired upon the accursed tree, the veil of the temple was rent in twain, the *Bath kol*, or voice of prophecy, was for ever hushed, the priestly mitre was broken. While the silent tomb contained the body of the Prince of Glory, and the shades possessed his human soul, the earth may be said to have lain under the curse of excommunication, because of the frightful crime which had just been perpetrated on its surface. There was then no divinely-appointed channel of communication between God and man, no church, in the world. But the first act of the risen Saviour was to plant again that mystic vine which had in ancient times filled only the lands of Palestine, but which was now destined, in its progressive growth, to overshadow the whole earth.

As the last act of the dying Saviour was to abrogate the Jewish, so the first act of the risen Saviour was to establish the christian church. He collected his

scattered orphan followers, who had been so long in preparation for the station which they were henceforth to occupy, but who, as yet, were invested with no authority ; but were, in all respects, what we should denominate laymen. And here, I may notice a view of the Church of Rome which is erroneous, and contradicts the analogy of Scripture, while there is no evidence for its support. According to it, the disciples of our Lord received their most solemn ordination on the occasion of the institution of the blessed sacrament of his body and blood, having previously been, in a measure ordained,* when they were at first called

* Here it is necessary to remove an objection which may occur to the reader of our English version of the New Testament. In the third chapter of St. Mark's Gospel, fourteenth verse, the original is rendered in our translation, "he *ordained* twelve." But this expression does not by any means imply that he conferred upon them a solemn ordination, like that which afterwards took place, as recorded by St. John. In the original, a word of the most general import is used "*εποίησε*," which

by him, and after his resurrection, receiving only a further commission. But for this progressive ordination, there is no authority, for, when first called, their training commenced for the office which they were after-

the translators have thought proper to render "ordained." Let the force of this word be compared with that of other Greek words used in various passages of the New Testament, which are rendered in our translation by the same word "ordained," but which refer to times when a christian church was established, and we shall find the comparison to favour the argument that the sending forth, mentioned by St. Mark, was no ordination, and that the translation of the word in our version is improperly selected. In Titus i. 5, the word "καταστησης" is used; in Acts xiv. 32, the word "χειροτονησαντες" is used, denoting the act of ordination; in 1 Tim. ii. 7, the word "ετιθην," and in Hebrews v. 1, the word "καθισταται" is used. All these expressions, written concerning the christian ministry after the Church was founded, have a more formal and technical meaning than "εποιησε," which describes an act performed at a time when there was no christian priesthood, and when, consequently, there could have been no valid ordination, according to the technical meaning of the term.

wards to fill, but the office itself was not conferred upon them. And at the first institution of the sacrament of the body and blood of our Lord, there is in Scripture nothing which leads us to suppose their condition to have been in any degree changed ; indeed, this could not be, as there was no christian church for them to be ordained into, until some days after, when our Lord was risen from the dead.

We are told by St. John, that on the first day of the week, the day of the resurrection, the first Lord's day, " At evening, when the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus, and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he showed them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus unto them again, Peace be unto you : as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive

ye the Holy Ghost; whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." In these words, we find the great head of the Church delegating to his chief disciples that power which they were from henceforth authorized to exert in governing the christian community, and in enlarging the boundaries of the kingdom of their divine Master, who, though about to be absent from them in the flesh, yet assured them of his spiritual presence, which He further promised to continue to all those whom they should qualify by ordination for serving Him in the sacred ministry. As is recorded in the description of this solemn scene by St. Matthew; "Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth; go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And lo, I

am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (St. Matt. xxviii. 18, &c.) That is, with you and those who shall come after you, filling your place.

Such were the circumstances attending the establishment of the christian church by the risen Saviour, who provided for its maintenance by the solemn separation of a body of men from their fellow-mortals, by an *afflatus*, or breathing forth, or unction of the blessed Spirit. These men, He invested with very awful powers, as every one must admit, who will suffer the Saviour's words to have a due meaning. And these men, He, by implication, authorized to delegate their authority to successors in office, by the remarkable expression, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Which words imply a succession, for the lives of those, to whom they were addressed, could not be expected greatly to exceed half a century.

II. Having thus considered the circumstances of the first institution of our

Church, let us turn to examine the nature of the appointment, or of the spiritual gift.

There is in the minds of some a confusion on the subject of the gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church, arising from a neglect to separate his influence upon the christian community at large, from his influence upon the christian ministry. But nothing can be more essentially distinct: and unless they are properly distinguished, it is impossible to form a clear idea of the nature of a church, consisting of a community of faithful people under the direction of divinely-appointed ministers, who are separated for their peculiar functions by certain gifts, and who are furnished with certain powers in order duly to administer them. The outward and visible christian church derives its origin from the breathing forth of the Holy Ghost by our Lord on his apostles, and the awful powers which He then delegated to them. While the outpouring of the Spirit at the feast of Pentecost, was the origin of that vital energy

which the outward and visible Church has received, to enable it to serve God aright, and to produce good works, the fruits of faith. The former affected and still affects the Church, through the medium of its pastors, as a body corporate, acting under their authority. While the latter affected, and still affects, the Church, inspiring it with vitality, even as a soul vivifies a body; and determining the relation of individuals before God, as members of that Church, and sharers of the grace of Christ. But besides the general and permanent effect, which the outpouring of the Spirit at the feast of Pentecost had upon the Church at large, it had a peculiar effect upon the already ordained ministers and governors, which we will now examine.

We have already seen from the narratives of St. John and St. Matthew, that our Lord, upon his resurrection, conferred ordination upon his apostles, and promised his abiding assistance and support to them and their successors. In the ac-

count of this solemn occurrence given by St. Luke, some of our Saviour's words are omitted; and there is the remarkable addition of a command to tarry at Jerusalem in expectation of an important event. "And behold I send the promise of my Father upon you, but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." (St. Luke xxiv. 49.) And in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, it is still more fully said, "And being assembled together with them, he commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses to me both in Jerusalem and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth."

The interview between our Saviour

and his apostles which is recorded by St. John, is the same with that recorded by St. Luke, or at least, it took place within the same short period of time, between his resurrection and his ascension. And in these two accounts, there seems, to a superficial reader, to be a difficulty. According to St. John, our Lord conferred upon his apostles the Holy Ghost, by breathing the Spirit forth upon them; and with this solemn act of consecration, He appointed them to preside as rulers over the Church, remitting and retaining sins, baptizing and preaching. While, according to St. Luke, He at the same time, spoke of the coming of the Holy Ghost as a future event, which was to happen to them shortly, after they should have waited in patient expectation of it. Christ breathed upon them, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost;" while even then, He spoke of the descent of the Holy Ghost as yet about to come: "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence; tarry ye in the

city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." It is evident that in these two synchronical passages, our Saviour refers to two separate influences of the blessed Spirit. The one of these was breathed forth by Him, when by that act, He constituted his apostles rulers over his Church ; while they were directed to wait yet awhile for the other, or the miraculous influence of the Holy Ghost, which was to be vouchsafed to them in an extraordinary degree at the feast of Pentecost, and which should pre-eminently qualify them for convincing the unbelieving Jews, and for converting the heathen to the truths of the Gospel. As soon as our Lord had breathed forth the Holy Ghost, his apostles were solemnly ordained to rule permanently over the christian church ; and the validity of this consecration was not and could not be strengthened, even by the miraculous outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, which did not make them more chief rulers in the church than they previously

were, but which added evidence and power to the testimony which they were called to give to the truth of their religion ; or, in other words, enabled them to make full proof of that ministerial office which they had already received.

Thus, between the day of our Lord's resurrection and the feast of Pentecost, they were already in every respect the visible heads of the Church, and they had full authority to ordain its ministers, and to regulate its internal affairs. They were restrained for the moment, from the public exercise of their ministry all over the world, until power of a different description should be given to them, until they should receive the spiritual baptism, until the Holy Ghost should descend upon them with his miraculous influence, to enable them with signs and wonders, to bear witness to the truth of the Gospel before kings and rulers, and to compass the uttermost parts of the earth, bringing glorious light to the nations that sit in darkness. That this is the view which

they themselves entertained, is proved by their conduct during the period that they remained duly consecrated bishops of the Church, without miraculous powers. Using the authority entrusted to them, and encouraged by their divine Master's promise, that He would be with the successors whom they should ordain, even unto the end of the world, they consecrated an apostle to fill the place of him, who, by treason, had fallen, and was gone to his own place. Spending the time of their expectation in retirement at Jerusalem, they abstained from the more public duties of converting and preaching, for which they were not yet fully qualified, and devoted themselves to the affairs of the christian family, ordaining Matthias to be their fellow-labourer in the Lord's vineyard, and co-ruler with them over the christian community. The last act of our divine Saviour upon earth was to provide for his Church a body of rulers, who, together with their successors, should attend to the spiritual necessities of the

faithful, until the end of time. While the first act of the dispensation of the Spirit was to impart miraculous powers to those men unto whom the head of the Church had already delegated his authority.

When we neglect to mark this distinction of the influences of the blessed Spirit, we are in danger of erroneously undervaluing the apostolical power of our ministry. And that this error has greatly prevailed among us, the lamentable number of sectarian communions affords a heart-rending proof. Fearful of the abuses of Romish tyranny, and desirous of avoiding, with regard to themselves, the possibility of similar misrule, these have fatally run into the opposite extreme; and thus the door has been opened to unspeakable disorder and endless confusion. The ministry of the Anglican Church, based on the firm rock of apostolical antiquity, has for its peculiar privilege the duty of exhibiting to the world what were christian doctrine and christian discipline, ages before the

abuses which we now deplore, had crept into the Roman branch of the church universal, and before that branch sought to usurp authority over all the others. And in doing this duty, we must equally enter a solemn protest against the innovations and irregularities with which most of the communions which have separated from that of Rome, are disgraced. We are assailed, on the one hand, by innovation assuming the mask of primitive antiquity, and introducing with a lie, the most mischievous novelties, proclaiming them to be ancient and true. While, on the other hand, we are assailed by innovation, glorying in its novelty, and pointing with the finger of petulant scorn at every barrier which would oppose its unbridled license. In the midst of these oppositions, it is our part and our privilege earnestly to contend for the faith and for the forms once delivered to the saints.

In the mediatorial kingdom of Christ, all Christians are subjects, but those who

are duly ordained only are ministers. And besides the connexion with the Mediator common to them with all Christians, they are connected with Him as bearing his special commission. And the medium of both is the blessed Spirit of truth ; though we must distinguish his operations in each, because they are bestowed in a different way, and for different purposes. We may consider the Third Person of the ever-blessed Trinity as the Monitor of all faithful Christians ; but as connected with the sacred ministry, we must consider him as imparting the power of Steward of the mysteries of God, which office cannot be validly executed without a divine commission. If we yield to all the obligations of this high commission, He will, moreover, be to *us*, in our priestly capacity, as we have already stated Him to be to *you*, Christians in general, a Monitor ; and He will enable us to stir up the grace that He gives us, in order that we may happily,

by God's divine aid, be the means of saving ourselves and them that hear us.

III. Having thus considered the circumstances of the first establishment of the Church, and the nature of the gift of the Holy Spirit, by which her ministers were consecrated, we must now inquire into some of the marks which distinguish her from those communions which falsely assume her venerable name. It is not enough that the religion of Christ should be taught, with a regard on the whole, to the fundamentals of doctrinal truth. We know that many of the inhabitants of Sychar believed on Christ, for the saying of the Samaritan woman, who testified concerning Him. Yet, had this woman, in process of time, built a chapel in her native city, and selected those whom she and her principal townspeople considered as qualified to teach and to preach; and had she and they refused to acknowledge the authority of St. Peter or St. John, on the ground

that they were independent of apostolic rule, because they taught and listened to the same doctrines, and produced and felt the same beneficial results ; we should here have had a rank and rapid development of schism, such as now besets us both at home and abroad. Where certain indications of the will of the Almighty, as to the constitution of the Church, are left on record, it becomes our duty to study them without prejudice. And we shall find that whatever evidence exists in Scripture with regard to any form of church government, is in favour of episcopacy, that the episcopal form and no other, is sanctioned therein, and, consequently, that in whatever degree any sect of professing Christians have deviated therefrom, they are worshipping in a way unauthorized by God, and running counter to his revealed will. Human laws and systems of government may require to be modified so as to suit the progressive changes of society. But what pertains to religion is governed by rules widely

different. Christian intercourse must be regulated by the authority of the word of God in every stage of its social advancement; and he who strives to model his conduct to his neighbour according to the requirements of the morality of the Gospel, will assuredly not neglect to obey divinely-authorized rules, or scorn to copy divinely-sanctioned examples, in the performance of those duties which comprise his intercourse with his Maker.

We have shown that our blessed Lord set apart a body of men to rule in the Church; let us inquire by whom that highest ecclesiastical order is now represented? It must be answered, by the bishops, who are invested with the powers which were possessed by the apostles; while the two inferior orders of the clergy represent those who, in apostolic times, were overseers of single congregations, and distributors of christian charity, or helpers of the presbyter in his pastoral care. However much the spiritual nature of the new covenant transcends that of

the old, it seems that in its most important external matters, the observances of the ancient dispensation may be transferred to the new ; and the very fact that in the Jewish hierarchy, there was a threefold order, and in the synagogue worship there was a threefold ministry, would lead us to expect, from analogy, that the same arrangement should obtain in the christian dispensation. We know, accordingly, that our Lord set apart his apostles, as chief pastors, that He, in like manner, sent forth seventy disciples, and that after his ascension, his inspired apostles added another order, that of deacons. The Scriptures inform us what were the fundamental principles of church government under the apostles. They themselves formed the first order, and we find in Acts xiv. 23, that they ordained presbyters in every church, for the higher offices of the ministry, (among whom were doubtless the seventy disciples of our Lord,) while, as is recorded in Acts vi. 5, they appointed deacons for sub-

ordinate duties. In process of time, as the number of christian converts increased, and as the original apostles were necessarily approaching the term of their mortal career, they delegated their authority to colleagues, who should exercise over the Church the same rule which they possessed, ordaining presbyters, and watching over their conduct. This confutes the notion that the chief pastoral power of the apostles was only for life ; for let any one carefully peruse the Epistles of St. Paul to Timothy and Titus, and then assert, if he can with any pretensions to candour, that apostolic powers were not delegated to them ! Their ordination was of a much more important nature than that of the presbyters, who were appointed in every place where a branch of the Church was planted : their province was to guide the spiritual concerns of a town, or district, containing subordinate congregations, for which they were empowered to ordain pastors, who were to act under their authority.

It would far exceed the bounds of a sermon, were we to adduce the various arguments for episcopacy with which the New Testament supplies us. Besides the instances of Titus and Timothy, I would adduce that of Epaphroditus, concerning whom St. Paul addresses the saints at Philippi, with the two inferior orders of clergy, the presbyters and deacons, introducing him to them as their apostle. (Phil. ii. 25.) “I supposed it necessary to send unto you, Epaphroditus, &c. &c., your messenger,” or, as it should be translated, your apostle—that is, a member of the highest order of clergy, appointed to superintend you and your pastors. Again, among the angels of the seven Asiatic churches, whom St. John addressed in the Apocalypse, we find the angel of the church of Ephesus. Now we know for certain that this ecclesiastic belonged to the highest order, and that he had many of the inferior clergy under him; because, very many years prior to the banishment of St. John to Patmos,

when the number of Christians was very much smaller, St. Paul, when he passed by Miletus, sent for the presbyters of the Church at Ephesus, who are, even then, spoken of as being a considerable body of men. (Acts xx. 17.) It must be observed, that in the times of the apostles, the language of church history was not fixed. Those whom they associated with themselves in the first rank were sometimes called apostles, and sometimes angels. And those who held the second rank were sometimes called bishops, and sometimes presbyters. We contend not for the identity of name, but for the identity of office; and we find in the sacred Word the existence of those three orders whom we denominate bishop, priest, and deacon. Theodoret informs us, that "those now called bishops were anciently called apostles, but in course of time the name of apostle was left to them who were truly apostles. Thus, in the earliest times, Epaphroditus was apostle of the Philippians, Titus of the Cretans, and Timothy

of the Asiatics." But the nomenclature was not probably settled in a moment, and St. John's messages to the angels of the churches would lead us to imagine that this title was intermediate between apostle and bishop. Let us carefully avoid the bewilderment of names, and remember that he who was chief pastor, whether styled apostle, angel or bishop, was always the predecessor of those who among us, are known by the latter title; and that the clergyman of the second order, whether styled elder or overseer, was the predecessor of our presbyter or priest.

It would be easy to show that the threefold order which we have traced to the word of God, obtained universally throughout the christian church during fifteen centuries. Clement and Ignatius, the companions and successors of the apostles, testify as to its prevalence in the earliest times of the Church, and in each successive century we find its continuance based upon the testimony of all authentic

history. No age of the Church can be named, when it was not under bishops, and no one but heretics ever cavilled at their government. So universally was antiquity agreed on the subject, that even in the early schismatic communions, there were bishops, who maintained their own succession ; thus affording the strong testimony in favour of one point of agreement, which the unanimity, as to that one particular, of two otherwise contending parties, always adds to it. This voice in favour of episcopacy was universally heard in the christian world for upwards of fifteen hundred years, when, at the time of the reformation of certain doctrines in the Church, a most extraordinary change was effected in the government of several subdivisions, which had heretofore existed in an ecclesiastical unity.

It is not for us here to trace the history of the changes of that momentous period, in which we have to congratulate ourselves on the position which our branch of the Church was, by the Providence of

God, led to assume. By divine mercy, and perhaps with little for which to thank the mere human agents, we have been restored from erroneous views of certain important truths, and, at the same time, preserved under the wholesome restraints of primitive discipline. Those who, in other lands, boldly emancipated themselves from the yoke of bondage under which the Western Church was depressed, and who rejected the manifold errors which had been raised upon the superstructure of divine truth, are liable to the serious charge, from which we are happily exempt, of having, together with error, thrown away much that was true and valuable. It is for the Almighty Searcher of hearts to judge in how far, their rejection of the rules of government, which were established by Christ and his apostles, and had been observed by the Church universal throughout all ages, is to be attributed to a sorrowful necessity, to a short-sighted view of expediency, or to a schismatic spirit. Perhaps among

the early reformers and their successors down to the present moment, we might discover the prevalence of all of these views and sentiments, and, in many individuals, a mixture of them. In reviewing the history of the different communions which have deviated from the apostolic government, we shall find some which seem, in the first instance, to have acted under the pressure of necessity, and to have been prevented afterwards by insurmountable political obstacles from retracing their steps; while others have gloried in their isolation and novelty, and have from generation to generation resisted the call to join the Church, branding its principles and rites with the most opprobrious epithets. Thus motives widely different may produce similarity of result.

To the question which occurs to any serious mind, on considering this subject: whether the deprivation of apostolical churchmanship excludes the communion so deprived from the divine blessings which are the portion of the church?—it may

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be replied, that He who is the giver of all grace is alone the judge of the degree of error and its cause ; and that it is not for us to assign limits to the fullness of God's bounty and the gifts of his Spirit. If we believe some of the original reformers to have been in error, we still dare not pronounce in how far the continuance of error in the subsequent generations may or may not have been voluntary, or in how far divine grace may supply even gross defects in the validity of the worship of communions who hold in sincerity the fundamentals of a right faith. Such considerations as these should for ever disarm our hasty censure or rash judgment of our brethren professing Christianity. " Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts." (1 Cor. iv. 5.)

The end of all government is the preservation of the interests of the community. That form of government which

seems most directly to be recognised by God in his word, is the monarchical, and this government we believe to be the best ; though we have seen the blessings of good order and prosperity conferred by a republican system. This furnishes us with an illustration, though an inadequate one, which may be applied to the church. The apostolical communion is that which alone is recognised in Scripture, and observed in the church universal. And yet we have seen bodies separated from that communion, from the individuals of which God does not seem to have withdrawn his graces and his gifts. In like manner, a river is the channel formed by nature's God, for dispensing the blessings of fertility and abundance over the land. Yet, in cases of need, the hand of man has hollowed out canals, by which a measure of the same blessings may be, though by an irregular method, imparted. We can only observe, lament, and avoid the irregularity. It is for God to judge of the necessity which called for it, and the

animus which prompted it. We have reason, with thankfulness, to reflect on the position which our church is called upon to hold in the christian world, based as she is on scriptural truth and apostolical antiquity, and equally removed from the novelties of those who would substitute tyranny for lawful authority, and of those who would sink that authority in disorderly license.

In conclusion, suffer me to address you in the words which our blessed Lord commanded his apostles to use, when he first sent them forth to proclaim his advent. "As ye go," said he, "preach the kingdom of heaven is at hand." How gracious is this message? It expresses the Lord's will that all mankind should be saved. It is not said, the grave is at hand; that would indeed have implied the melancholy truth that the world is vain, and that all its enjoyments are so fleeting, as scarcely to deserve the regard of an immortal being; that would have implied the speedy extinction of all our earthly

hopes and wishes. The grave is at hand. So much for the beauty of youth, the pride of learning, the lustre of birth, the vigour of health, the luxuries of riches, and the endearments of affection ; all swept into the cold grave, which is so soon to receive us, of whatsoever rank, age, or condition we be, or in whatever degree we stand prepared for the awful change. Nor is it here said, that hell is at hand ! This would, indeed, have implied the sovereign justice of God and the punishment of sinful man ; this would have implied, that although vice may prosper and vanity exult while life lasts, yet when the body is consigned to the tomb, the sinner's soul shall, in present woe and fearful expectation of future judgment, pay the penalty of those stains which he has never sought to wash away in a Saviour's blood. Declarations such as these might truly have preached to the worldling the vanity of his earthly possessions, and have alarmed the sinner, showing him the terrible abyss of the future. But neither of these announce-

ments, however true, would have been hailed by the lost world as the glad tidings of great joy, which is the distinguishing character of the gospel of Christ. Were we to preach to you nothing but the grave awaiting the mortal, and hell awaiting the sinner, we should certainly be the messengers of no joyful sound to your ears.

But our message to you is one of good news, that the kingdom of heaven is at hand ! And this implies not only the two former, but a great deal more. The grave is at hand to receive your mortal bodies, and hell is at hand to receive the souls of those who die unreconciled to Christ. But the kingdom of heaven is at hand to receive them that fall asleep in Jesus. Death is deprived of its sting, and the grave is robbed of its victory, by the heavenly light which the eye of faith descries through the dark passage of the tomb. And hell is chained in captivity at the foot of Christ's cross ; for its power cannot extend over those for whom the

Saviour died, and who will receive the gracious message which he communicates to lost sinners, which he commissioned his apostles to convey, and which he, this day, addresses to you, through their successors in the sacred office. Did we look upon the grave as the end of our hopes, the termination of our enjoyments, death would be an enemy armed with unspeakable terrors even to the stoutest heart; and did we regard the outer darkness and the unquenchable fire of hell as the certain, no less than just requital of every erring life, our days would be spent in misery and fear. But when we know, that although the grave is indeed the last earthly abode of every son of Adam, yet that those who have been transformed into children of God, are enabled to look forward to "a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;" (2 Cor. v. ;) and when we know that although hell is the fitting punishment of sin, yet that Jesus Christ has given himself to death, in order to deliver us from

sin, and to save us from that dreadful end, and that he invites all to come to him and have rest and peace ; then, we are inspired with a sure confidence, and are made, through God's grace, "willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord." (2 Cor. v.)

Now is our time for becoming heirs of the kingdom of God, or rather for securing to ourselves the portion in it which was made ours at baptism, but which we have squandered on sin and folly during the journey of life. And shall we then throw away the pearl of great price, thus mercifully held within our reach, in order to snatch the unsubstantial trifles which elude our grasp, and leave us baffled and outwitted, when it is too late to follow a wiser course ? "When the silver cord shall be loosed, and the golden bowl shall be broken, when the dust shall return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it," then, at length, will the trifler and lover of pleasure rather than of God ; then, at length, will the grave man

of worldly wisdom, who thought more of adding pound to pound, and acre to acre, than of “adding to faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness;” then, at length, will such persons be compelled to acknowledge, that all they have been pursuing was vanity of vanities : all was vanity.

Let us remember, that however lawfully we may be attached to this world, and however indispensably we may be occupied with its engagements, a time is not far distant when we shall receive an authoritative summons which we must obey, and which not all the ties of the fondest affection, not all the distractions of the world with its business and its pleasures, will enable us for one moment to avert. Christ will speedily summon us hence ; we must at length stand before his judgment-seat, and there we shall appear naked and friendless, stript of all that had rendered the world sweet to us. None of those

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who have loved, or protected, or served, or esteemed, or flattered, or amused us here, shall attend us before the awful bar of eternal justice. Christ will summon us, and we must obey. We must follow the signal when it strikes our ear, whether we be in the midst of the endearments of social life, or distracted with the thoughtless revelry of the banquet, or immersed with important concerns of the gravest interest. O may we all be prepared ! O may we all be doing the Lord's work, so that, when He comes, He may find us watching for his arrival !—AMEN.

SERMON IV.

THE OBLIGATION TO GLORIFY GOD.

1 COR. vi. 20.

“ For ye are bought with a price : therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

MAY the Spirit of God be present with us this day, to excite in us a lively attention to the truth stated in the text; and may we be led from its consideration, to draw the same practical inference with St. Paul ! May the knowledge that we are no longer our own, but that we belong to him who bought us with a price, cause us to withdraw, not only from the commission of sin, but also from the exclusive pursuit of mere worldly interest

or pleasure, in order to devote our lives to his peculiar service! May a sense of the benefit which changed our condition from slavery to freedom and adoption, and which transferred us from an old to a new master, enable us to appreciate the privilege of spending and of being spent in that Master's service; and may gratitude for his goodness produce in us a habit of strict watchfulness over every movement of our hearts, lest we should prove thankless to him, or do aught to grieve his Spirit!

We are naturally led to arrange our consideration of the text under two divisions: I. The truth which is stated, "We are bought with a price;" and, II. the inference drawn from this truth, "therefore glorify God."

I. "We are bought with a price," and this suggests the following inquiries:

1. From whom were we bought, and from what condition did this purchase remove us?

2. By whom and how were we bought?

3. Are we actually thus bought ?

1. St. Paul thus addressed the Corinthian converts to Christianity : “ Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God ? Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.”— (1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.) Were the individuals of most congregations to examine the records of their past lives, and the state of their hearts, they would find that with respect to some one or other of the above-mentioned crimes, the words of the apostle, in continuation, might apply to themselves, “such were some of you.” It would be better for us to make this penitent confession to Almighty Justice now, during our day of grace and trial, than to be compelled to make it hereafter, when there can be no more room for repentance. Let us then pray to our heavenly Father,

that for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, he would apply to our consciences the torch of divine truth, which will illuminate the darkest recesses of our minds, and bring forth their hidden stores of sin. Let us pray for godly sorrow now, in order that hereafter we may not become the victims of despair ! To those of us who are moved in penitent acknowledgment to God, to exclaim, *such were we* ; to those of us who, like the publican, cry out, God be merciful to us sinners, the continuation of St. Paul's words may, it is humbly hoped, be applied, " but ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified." In our original condition as we were born, and as so many continue, despising and rejecting their baptismal privileges, we could not be the servants of God, for the characteristic mark of his service is holiness and righteousness ; " Then we were dead in trespasses and sins, wherein we walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit

that worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." (Eph. ii.) Living thus without God in the world, even worse than the heathen, whom the apostle in these words addresses, because, having been made sons in baptism, we have rebelled; and thus having our conversation among the children of disobedience, we were subject to their master, the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in them. He then was our Lord, and to him did we, as slaves, pay the homage of our obedience, and from him have we been purchased. For though sinfully and foolishly we have turned from the Benefactor and rejected the benefit, yet for us, God the Son became incarnate, for us, He was consecrated a priest, for us, He offered a sacrifice; our nature He assumed, in order to purify it, and for us, He founded the church into which we have been admitted by the washing of regeneration.

Now to the unrenewed mind, the service of Satan is one of glory ; he is by our Saviour styled prince of this world, and he often richly bestows his favours in honours and enjoyments upon those who serve him. When he was permitted to tempt the Messiah, “ he showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, and said, All these will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.” An unconverted mind prizes the certain possession of the substantial emoluments and honours of the world, or of its more empty pleasures and vanities, with which the world’s Lord rewards his subjects, far beyond the unseen things of God’s kingdom, which, though eternal, are yet in his estimation uncertain, because unseen. He therefore exclaims, Let me eat, let me drink : life is short ; let me make the most of it. He therefore clings the more fondly to the worldly phantoms which Satan sends to allure him, and he grasps the more eagerly after the gains with which he keeps him in pay. And he, perhaps,

does not see the futility and real misery of his condition, until the close of his life, when all his gains prove insufficient to buy a resting-place for his soul ; and when the idols of lust or ambition which he had worshipped, vanish, like phantoms, from his sight, and leave the wretched being, whom they had so long deluded, in the gripe of death. Or if, as often happens, there are "no bands" in the death of the child of this world, then the idols whom he had served and loved, meet him to torment him in the place of eternal punishment. The sinner who here serves intemperance, or uncleanness, or avarice, or malevolence, little thinks that he is providing for himself companions, who will prove his everlasting persecutors, to pursue him with unceasing and increasing torments.

He who has not, by the grace of God, passed from death to life, is pleased with the glitter of the wages of sin, without heeding their issue of death ; and he would shrink at the thought of being

separated from a master like Satan, who possesses so many good things to give. But let such a dupe of sin and folly weigh well the import of the word *eternity*, and then let him answer the question of our Lord, "What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

2. Let us next inquire by whom and how we were bought? He who has solemnly considered the meaning of the words, time and eternity, heaven and hell; he who has contemplated the glory and justice of God, and the corruption and rebellion of man; he who has felt his heart warmed by the view of his Saviour's adorable mercy, will know how to unite his voice with that of St. Paul, who, when he regarded himself, cried almost in despair, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? but who, when he contemplated the atonement of his Saviour, said, "I thank God,

through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Rom. vii. 24.) He it is that has bought us : “ Jesus Christ being come, a High Priest of good things to come, by his own blood entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us ; He hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and was once offered to take away the sins of many.” (Heb. ix.) “ God, who is rich in mercy, hath saved us by his grace, quickening us together with Christ. Now in Christ Jesus, we, who were sometime afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. Through him we have access by one spirit into the Father, and are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ being the chief corner-stone.” (Ephesians ii.) Jesus bought us by the sacrifice of Himself. He shed his blood for us, that we might be reconciled by that offering to our God, justly offended because of our sins. His love was the procur-

ing cause of this great sacrifice, “ Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” And the Son of God laid down his life for his enemies. How surpassingly great, then, must his love have been !

Christ our Lord bought us with his blood, and in order to bring down to us the blessings which He has procured for us, He has appointed means of grace, channels of mercy, to communicate salvation from God to man, and to keep man in such a christian state of heart and mind as may enable him evermore to taste this blessing. When Christ commanded that his religion should be spread over all countries, he did not entrust the teaching of the nations to any that chose, without rule, commission, or discipline, to proclaim his name, and invite the world to believe in Him. He did not leave it to the secret influence of divine grace alone, without outward agency, to turn the hearts of unbelievers to the knowledge of the truth. And not distinctly to mark

this, is one of the great errors of the popular religionists of the present day. They think forms formal, without considering that our blessed Lord strictly enjoined them, of great simplicity indeed, yet of binding and absolute necessity. They think the outward constitution of a church calculated rather to stifle holy energies, and to quench the spirit of vital religion, without considering that our Saviour did not leave the blessed task of evangelizing the world to the woman of Samaria, or to self-appointed messengers like her, but that He delegated authority to a body of men with whom, and with whose successors, he promised to continue present in the Spirit, and with power, even unto the end of the world.

It is not enough merely to hear Christ's religion taught, and to be filled with admiration of its excellence, and to feel a glow of devotion towards its divine Founder, and to talk of our experiences of his love, and to build up a fanciful system of religious sentiment. We must accept his offer,

and obey his injunctions : “ Every one that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved,” said he ; and “ do this in remembrance of me,” said he, of that sacrament of which in another place he declared, “ Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.” We must enter into the covenant by which we are made members of Christ, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven ; and we must again and again renew that covenant by acts of faith and obedience at the table of the Lord, where our souls are nourished by his most precious body and blood, and from whence, being refreshed by their strengthening influence, we are enabled to perform that which at our baptism we were enjoined to do ; manfully to fight as good soldiers of Christ, under his banner, against sin, the world, and the devil.

Christ saves us by his death, but he imparts unto us the benefits of salvation through his church ; and by his church we do not here mean only the body of

true Christians, to us undiscernible, while in the flesh ; the wheat as distinguished from the chaff, from which it will never be separated until the day of judgment, and which all attempts to separate now will fail, as the efforts of sectarian bigotry and unchristian prejudice. By church, we do not mean the invisible church, which is known to God only ; but that which is outward and visible, which Christ founded before He left this world, over which he placed his apostles and their successors as rulers and guides, against which he promised that the gates of hell should never prevail, which He supplied with various means of grace, and among them, as the chief, with the blessed sacraments, which are essential to all who would be Christians ; or, as our catechism excellently expresses it, are generally necessary to salvation. The dispensing of the sacraments in and by the church, is the method by which our Lord applies to us the benefit of the purchase in which he paid for us the price of his blood.

By the sacrament of baptism or laver of regeneration, we are engrafted into Christ, made members of his church, and inheritors of his kingdom; admitted into covenant with God, and changed, as to our condition, from enemies and rebels to children and heirs. Among those, and alas ! they are many, who reject this doctrine, and who would trace their regeneration from some point in their lives according to their own fancy, and not to the solemn institution of our Saviour; the question frequently arises, how can the new birth be identical with baptism, seeing that so many who are baptized, continue in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity? The answer to this question is plain : by regeneration we are not only admitted to the privileges and benefits of the church of Christ, we are actually changed from a state of wrath to one of reconciliation with God ; the seed of eternal life is sown in our hearts ; we are not only admitted to outward means of grace, we are actually made inheritors of God's kingdom

and heirs of his promises. But there is such a thing in the spiritual, as well as the natural and social world, as an heir, who squanders his inheritance, and, by his own fault, loses the blessings which were actually his assured birthright; and in the former, this miserable extravagance is infinitely more common than in the latter. For the effect of our original depravity is so strong as to blind us to our eternal interests; whereas, the cases are comparatively rare, that a man, by persevering in reckless profusion, squanders away all his worldly advantages. Most men are alive to the value of what is seen, while few have faith sufficient to appreciate the importance of what is wholly future and invisible. The heavenly inheritance is ours by virtue of our new birth, even as a fair estate is the birthright of the son of a noble and opulent family. But as he may reduce himself to beggary, so may we make shipwreck of our souls, and subject ourselves to eternal destitution, by preferring temporal things

to spiritual ; by living for the present enjoyment, rather than for the present duty, and thus seeking to have our portion here at the expense of our happiness hereafter. But to such unhappy squanderers of a heavenly heritage, their despised and forgotten baptism, and their neglected baptismal privileges will not merely go for nothing, as an advantage not improved. The blessing lost will be an eternal curse entailed. A baptized man, one who has been made an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven, and a child of God, will not be dealt with as those will, who have never been admitted to that heritage, nor raised to that adoption. In proportion to the privilege received, will be the reckoning demanded, and if that prove unsatisfactory, the punishment inflicted.

A soldier who has taken an oath of allegiance, and has even been raised to a place of trust in the camp, but who deserts to the enemy, is punished in a different way from a foreign mercenary who has joined the enemy's standard. The

ingratitude of one who has been loaded with benefits, stings us more than the unkindness of one whom we had never before seen. The parricide excites more horror than an ordinary murderer. The baptized man who, in spite of his baptismal covenant, leads an unchristian life, will meet with a different sentence from him who has never been admitted into that covenant. When the holiest things are trampled upon, the most effectual means of grace are slighted, and the most precious treasures are thrown away, the sin acquires a deeper die, and the consequent vengeance will be of proportioned severity. Expositions of christian doctrine lose their greatest force, and must fail of producing a due effect, when they do not mark this immense difference ; and when, practically regarding baptism as only one among many other means of grace, they point to some fancied epoch of the sinner's life, and to some sudden change in his way of thinking, speaking, and acting, as the time of his regenera-

tion, the moment when the christian life was imparted to him, when he was admitted to the privileges of adoption, and consequently, when he first undertook the awful responsibilities of this condition. These great responsibilities commenced the moment that we passed through the laver of regeneration. Then the christian seed was sown in us, which the various means of grace given by God, in and through his visible church, are calculated to bring to maturity. And if they fail of effecting this, the fault is ours, and we must pay the penalty.

But who is there that keeps his baptismal covenant? Who is there that acts up to his duty as a good soldier of Christ, and remembers his awful responsibilities? The best of us have fearfully sinned, and come short of the glory of God. And are we, therefore, not regenerate? If baptized, we are regenerate to our grievous condemnation; and in order to escape that condemnation, we must be turned again to God by his divine grace, we must

be converted; the influence of the Holy Spirit will descend upon us, if we pray for his presence, and lead us to the only source of eternal hope, the cross of Christ, and impart to our wounded spirits the healing balm of that blood which was shed to take away the sins of the world. At his crucifixion, the blessed Saviour interceded for his tormentors; and, even now, we daily see the declared enemy of God brought humbly to confess the faith which he once denied. We sometimes see the sinner advancing to a point where we might expect the mercy of God to abandon him, and even at the moment when we are looking for vengeance, the sword of justice is changed into a sceptre of mercy, and we behold him bow down, a miracle of redeeming love, at the foot of his Saviour's cross. The same power which once said to the winds and to the waves, peace, be still, now calms the tumult of passion in the sinner's breast. The same power which once said, Lazarus, come forth, and raised the corpse from the

vault of corruption, now vivifies the spiritually dead, and calls them forth from the tomb of guilt. The same power which once cast out devils from the possessed, and restored cleanness to the leper, now delivers the sinner from the evil influences which prey upon his heart, and removes from the guilt-polluted soul the stain which defiled it. And all this our Lord does not only for aliens, but for rebels; for those who have fallen away from his holy covenant, who have squandered the heavenly inheritance which was made theirs. But in doing this for them he makes them his friends. "Ye are my friends," said he, "if ye do what I command you." It ought to be a delightful condition, in return for all these benefits, to bear Christ's yoke, and to obey his commands. Though to an unconverted nature the performance of Christ's will may be grievous, to one who has been turned to God, obedience to Him is a privilege which love renders blessed. To such an one, not all the

advantages which the world in its most lavish profusion could bestow, would compensate for the alienation from him, which is produced by wilful sin.

To illustrate the position which has been set forth, that regeneration is not conversion, and that a baptized man, however fearfully he may fall into guilt and misery, is never a stranger to God, though he may have alienated himself and become a rebel and enemy; I would adduce one of the parables of our blessed Lord. It is one wherein the divine mercy is the most graciously declared, and which affords the most striking example of the rebellious child rescued from guilt and ruin by a father's tenderness; and, when converted and humbled, at length restored to the forfeited blessings of a home, which had been his original inheritance. The son of a wealthy and noble house despises the substantial comforts and virtuous enjoyments of a well-regulated and honour-

able establishment, and foolishly demanding his share of the family provision, goes forth to see the world, to mix in its vanities, and taste its pleasures. The misguided steps of the heedless youth soon run into ways of extravagance, vice, and ruin. He spends his substance in riotous living. He is reduced to misery, in the foreign land, which he had preferred to his paternal domain. Vice, which had allured him, soon enslaved him ; and after having bewitched him for a while with her fascinations, soon displayed to him her hideous reality, and showed him the miserable exchange which he had made for his fair inheritance. The gay illusions of the senses soon fade away, and he is left a ruined, helpless man, to drag out a miserable existence in that sordid and brutal condition, which the intoxication of a moment had invested with the hues of paradise. But the sense of his wretched degradation came in time to save him. He

remembered his father's house, and him from whom he was sprung. He said, I was the heir of ample lordships, I was not born for beggarly drudgery. This is not my native land; to tend these swine is not my proper office, to share with them the offals of a stranger's kitchen is not my original portion of a rich man's children's bread. (St. Luke xv.)

"How many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise, and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." Convinced of his sins, he hastened to his father's house.

"He arose and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him." This is not a stranger, then, for the first time, convinced of the superiority of the comforts and privileges of the great and good man's house, and

eagerly coming to exchange the bondage of a hard taskmaster for his reasonable service and honourable wages. It is a son of the family, who had wandered far from the walls of his native home, but who, at length, conscious of sin and folly, is humbly suing to be admitted to his original privileges. “And the father said to his servants, bring forth the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet, and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and be merry ; for this my son was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found.” This is not a stranger, an alien, who, attracted by the excellency of this great householder, and by the hope of his favourable notice, comes to him, for the first time, as a suppliant. It is his own son, the co-heir of his wealth, the sharer of the name and dignity of his house, who had gone weakly and wickedly forth ; but being converted, now returns, and is reinstated in his renounced privileges, and restored to his forfeited honours.

The meaning of the parable is too evident to render it necessary that I should dwell upon its application. The prodigal is the type, not of a heathen brought for the first time under the influence of gospel truth; but of a baptized Christian, who had scorned the advantages of his spiritual birthright, and renounced its privileges, and who, conscience-stricken and humbled, returns to the haven of rest and security from whence he had at first departed, to mix in the temptations, turmoils, cares, and pleasures of this naughty world. He is converted by God's grace, and is re-admitted to taste those blessings, which at first were his. He was a child of the family, before he originally wandered forth on the high way of sin and vanity. While he traversed this broad road which leadeth to destruction, he was, though erring and apostate, a child of the family still; and when converted and returned, he was not *then made* a child of the family. He resumed his original position, he was restored to

his early portion. Thus we find that the very instance given by our blessed Lord, the very instance which is always and rightly quoted, in order to illustrate the divine mercy, gives no countenance whatever to the doctrine of a new birth after baptism ; but shows that the baptized sinner, when converted, returns precisely to that point from which he deviated in his sinful courses, and to that portion to which his baptism had made him heir. He is reinstated in his heritage, yet not without loss ; as all sin must have some punishment. In following out the type of the converted sinner which the prodigal affords, it must be evident that it is his natural birth which is figurative of our spiritual birth, and not his return from feeding upon husks to his father's mansion. And yet the latter is the violent and untrue construction put upon this beautiful parable, by that numerous class of expounders of scripture who confound conversion with regeneration, and tell us that we are born again then, and not

till then, when the grace of God convinces us of sin, and leads us back to the adoption, which was in fact our spiritual birthright.

3. Let each one of us examine ourselves—are we actually removed from the dominion of Satan to that of Christ? The question is not, do we never feel the force of attachment to sin? Do we never perceive impure or angry passions rising in our hearts? Are we never tempted to sin against God? These vestiges of our original corruption will, alas! never be eradicated until our souls are separated from our bodies, which, in their actual mortal state, render us ever liable to temptation, and often lead us into transgression. But the question is, do we, notwithstanding the force of our corrupt natures, feel a paramount love for Christ? Do we habitually desire to please, and fear to offend him? Are we enabled by divine grace, thus to address Him?—Lord, thou knowest that many thoughts arise in our hearts, and many passions are cherished

there, which are contrary to thy laws; thou knowest that we are often led into sins which grieve thy Holy Spirit; yet thou knowest that we love thee, and that our desire is to be in all things subject to thy righteous reign. Assist us, then, against the power of Satan. Assist us to resist our treacherous hearts, and to curb our unruly desires; and bring us more and more in entire obedience, to the foot of thy cross. If we be truly removed from the dominion of Satan by love for our Saviour, whether the stage of our christian attainment be that of the babe or of the perfect man, we shall equally regard sin as the greatest evil, and God as the greatest good. And on this point our judgment will rest unchanged, even when a corrupt nature leads us into alienation. "The good that you would, you do not, but the evil that you would not, you do." The backslider in heart, on the contrary, approves of sin, and when he falls into error, instead of increasing in caution, and renewing his petitions for divine

strength, he wanders further and further away even unto utter perdition.

Let us inquire, is sin our burden and our grief? And even when it does prevail against us, do we habitually pray and endeavour to overcome it? Do we strive to be clothed with the whole armour of God? Do we repose our confidence in what Christ has done for us, persevering in humble applications for mercy at the foot of his cross; while we unceasingly try to attain to new degrees of obedience to him and conformity with him? If such, my brethren, be the workings of your hearts, (and, O, make a sincere inquiry, and demand an honest answer,) you may trust that they proceed from the breathings of the Spirit of grace; and though the blossoms and fruits in the garden of your souls be often nipped by the chilling blasts of sin, you may hope that there is life in the roots, which will sprout forth, and grow up as flourishing trees of righteousness.

II. Having considered the truth stated in the text, *we were bought with a price*, let us now attend to the inference which St. Paul draws from it : *Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirits, which are God's.*

How few are there among those who profess the christian religion, who are conscious of even striving to glorify God ! Many, who will readily assent to the truth stated in the text, *We are bought with a price* ; for this truth is the mainspring of Christianity, have yet but little idea of what the apostle means by glorifying God with the body and with the spirit, which are God's. The great body of those who have been admitted into the church of Christ by the holy rite of baptism, who dwell in a christian community, and who call themselves by the name of Christ, as the founder of their faith, are yet far from him in their hearts and in their lives, and give themselves but little concern about the eternal interests of their souls. The mass of mankind may be divided

into four classes. 1. Those who obstinately refuse to turn to God. 2. Those who delay to turn to him until a convenient season. 3. Those who are apparently converted only to return to sin. 4. Those who think that they have no need of conversion.

The hardened sinners who compose the first class, are generally strangers to God's holy house. The Bible is full of terrible denunciations against them. If they ever open a religious book, or hear a serious word, they read or hear their own condemnation. I will not now enlarge upon their condition.

But few congregations meet together which do not contain some of the second class,—those who delay turning to God until some convenient season. Such persons admit, perhaps, that there is much room for amendment. Why, then, do they not pray for grace to amend? Why do they not use their own endeavours, after having prayed to God to bless them? One can never too soon begin that

course of life which alone can lead to salvation. They expect, perhaps, they will say, to become better at some future stage of their lives. What is to be the turning point? Does God give a secure lease of life, so that it may thus be accurately portioned out between rebellion or carelessness and repentance? Such persons, perhaps, hope not to die as they have lived. But what right have they to look for a miracle at the moment of death? Be assured that death will only bring about the superlative degree of our state during life. If we have lived as children of God, death, or rather the resurrection from the grave, will seal our union with Him. But if we have lived as strangers to Him, death will not bring us nearer to his favour. Above all, let us avoid the fatal and presumptuous mistake of going on to sin, trusting to the unbounded mercy of God for salvation at the last.

An equally numerous class is that of those who are apparently converted only

to return to sin. Unto such, these words of Scripture may be well applied—"Unstable as water, you do not excel." "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, then follow Him, but if Baal be God, then follow him." Cease to scandalize the faithful servants of God by professing their faith, merely to dishonour it by sinful or vain conduct. The professing Christian affords a handle of reproach to the profane, when he evidently strives to serve two masters, God and mammon, and when his relapses into sin succeed his expressions of contrition so rapidly, that both the religious and the worldly stand in doubt of him, and the thoughtless children of vanity laugh at his inconsistency. If the Lord be God, then follow Him. But let us not diverge from the straight path of Christian duty in order to bend the knee to Baal. "What concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel, or what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" (2 Cor. vi.)

Another very numerous class of professing Christians is that which consists of those who think that they have no need of conversion. Many persons, setting out on a different principle, run practically into a similar error with those, whose sectarian or enthusiastic views I have already noticed, and who confuse conversion with regeneration. These, on the other hand, confuse regeneration with conversion. They think that all must be well with them, because they have been baptized, and because in baptism they were born again, made inheritors of the kingdom of heaven, and admitted as adopted children of the Most High. Alas, how few of those who possess such glorious privileges, avail themselves of them ! And how many leave the goodly portion of their Father's house which is theirs, in order to waste their substance in riotous living, or, at least, to spend their money on that which is not bread, and their labour on that which profiteth not ! How many leave the feast pre-

pared for their soul's nourishment, in order to feed upon the husks of sin and of vanity ! Let it be remembered that if conversion is not regeneration, regeneration is not necessarily conversion. To the prodigal, in his want and misery, it would have availed nothing that he was the son of a rich and noble father, had he not bethought him of the fair possessions which he had abandoned, and had he not hastened, while there was yet time, to reclaim them. To the baptized Christian, who has forgotten the solemn engagement of his baptism, to be a good soldier of Christ, and manfully to fight against his enemies, it will avail nothing that he has been admitted to be an inheritor of the heavenly kingdom ; if he does not, while his day of probation is yet extended, make haste to turn to God, who still waiteth to be gracious to him, and is ever more ready to hear than we are to pray, and more willing to forgive than we are to sue to be forgiven.

It is to be feared that the state of those

who, in sin and thoughtlessness, think that they have no need of conversion, is more dangerous than even that of any of the other classes. For these have all some misgivings. Even the voice of natural conscience informs them that all is not right. They feel miserable, from being desperate and reckless; or they look forward to some future change; or they are sensible of frequent inconsistencies, and deplore their folly. But the self-satisfied go on in placid contentment, with the notion that they are on the right road, and prevented by the darkness which surrounds them, from seeing the precipice on the brink of which their way terminates. It would be well for those who lead worldly, indifferent lives, thinking that their freedom from gross evil will amply atone for the absence of the love of God and love of man, if they would ask themselves, do I glorify God in my body and in my spirit, which are God's? The very strangeness of such a question to the ears of the worldling

might startle him with the dread that all was not right with him. And this is the question that will be asked us when life's short journey is over ; and according to our answer will be our eternal fate.

Let us endeavour to apply to ourselves the threats and promises of Scripture. Let us consider whether by such or such an action we show forth the love of Christ constraining us. Let us inquire whether, by cultivating such or such a habit of thought or frame of spirit, we shall effectually promote our union with Him. Those, who upon earth know nothing of a desire to promote the glory of God, cannot expect, when they leave this world, to be united to that blessed assembly of saints who surround his throne, whose enjoyment shall be to celebrate his praise, and whose business shall be, as ministering servants, to execute his will. As we feel here, we must feel hereafter, only in a much more eminent degree. If we are indifferent to the glory of God here, a disunion of our souls from our bodies will not make that our chief concern.

And if we now coldly respond to the love of Christ, the contact of the grave will not inspire us with vital warmth. As we feel in life, so shall we feel in death, and so shall we feel after death. May God grant that the affections and desires of our hearts be so turned now, as to promote our eternal felicity !

But in the midst of this worldly multitude who pursue the broad road that leads to destruction, there is to be found a peculiar and chosen people, who work out their salvation humbly and fearfully, but steadily ; who are in the world, but whose hearts are not of the world, who depend upon Christ with fervent faith, who pray for the consolations and aids of the blessed Spirit, whom they strive not to grieve by a conformity with sin ; who are all alive to their eternal interests, and to whom this cherished earth is a scene of pilgrimage, and not a home. They know that in order to avail themselves of their baptismal privileges, and to approve themselves good soldiers of Christ, they must be “ temples of the living God, as God

hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor. vi.) It is only those who are thus temples of the living God, or, in other words, who have communion with Him, who seek to draw near unto Him, and who strive to please Him, who have any right to hope that they are effectually and practically bought with a price; for then, do they glorify God in their body and in their spirits. But in order to do this, we must be in the world, performing our duty in our appointed station, yet not exclusively belonging to it. We must not suppose that the sanction which custom or numbers may bestow upon sin, can make our way secure. We must, on the contrary, remember, that in order to be safe, we

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must live circumspectly, and not resemble the mass of mankind in sin and in folly. We must remember that we are only then doing our duty, when, in the diligent performance of our worldly vocation, we have our eyes fixed on our heavenly home ; when, in the daily affairs of life, we strive to please our Master ; when, whether we eat or drink, we do all for the glory of God.

It is recorded in the Book of Baruch, that the Prophet Jeremiah did, to this effect, solemnly warn the Israelites, when they were about to depart from Jerusalem to Babylon : “ When you arrive at Babylon, you will see the inhabitants of that country carrying gods of silver and gods of gold, and bowing down and worshipping them. But you must not suffer yourselves to be seduced by their impious example. You must address God, saying, Thee and Thee only, O Lord, will I adore ! ” And thus, in the words of the prophet, may a Christian priest address his congregation. In every stage

of life, you are necessarily surrounded by the various idols before which the children of the world prostrate themselves. "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world, and the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God, abideth for ever." (1 John ii.) You will see the vain objects of human passion, the cares and the pleasures, which are all-important and all-engrossing to those who know not the rest of God's love. You will also see the vices and the follies which pass current for established usages and laws among men. Then let me exhort you, my brethren, to turn unto God and say, Thee and Thee only, O Lord, will I adore. I will have no abiding portion among those who know Thee not. I will follow no law except Thy holy laws. The idols which the foolish multitude adore shall not be objects of my worship. They are formed by the hand of men, and with

men they shall perish; "the world passeth away, and the lust thereof." Thou, and Thou only, art immortal. The time of our earthly pilgrimage, which is but as the captivity of the soul, draws to an end. Thou wilt transplant Thy people into Thy holy city, and there Thou wilt reign gloriously over Thy spiritual Israel. Then, all the monuments of human pride and worldly folly shall be destroyed. All that the vanity of man has prized shall be annihilated, and Thou, and Thou only, remaining unto everlasting, shalt receive the adoration of the hosts of heaven!—Amen.

SERMON V.

THE CARELESS WORLD AND ITS
PUNISHMENT.

ST. LUKE xvii. 26, 27.

“ And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark; and the flood came and destroyed them all.”

“ AND God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually; and it repented the Lord that He had made man, and it grieved Him at his heart.”

(Gen. vi. 5.) How different was this from the benediction which the Father of the universe pronounced upon the world and its inhabitants, when they came forth from his hands, in all the freshness and beauty of recent creation ! Then, sin had not tainted the divine image, which the finger of God had impressed on the chief of his works. Then, the heart of man was right before God, and his steps had not deviated into the ways of crooked perverseness. Then, the Creator viewed with satisfaction the beautiful work which He had made, and the hosts of heaven rejoiced over man, thus called into existence, to share with themselves, the bounty of their Lord. But disobedience soon destroyed the excellence of this work, turning its beauty into deformity. And it is worthy of remark, that the sin then committed was, to all appearance, in itself, a matter of trifling import. The first pair were not driven from paradise for any atrocious act of guilt, as we reckon by human measurement—but for a simple

act of disobedience, which, as it was without any aggravating circumstances, to render it peculiarly odious in the sight of man, is thereby calculated to demonstrate still more clearly the exceeding sinfulness of sin. The murderer, the covenant breaker, the adulterer, and the injurious, know that their course is an open violation of every rule of justice and maxim of morality; so that, if a retributive power exists, their iniquity cannot remain unpunished. But a man without much sense of religion, who is able to call to mind many praiseworthy acts, and who is conscious of being generally actuated by amiable feelings, is in danger of being deluded with a false view of his position before God. From this mistake he may be awakened, by considering the example of our first parents, who, for one simple act of disobedience, were expelled for ever, from the enjoyment of God's presence and favour on earth, and were placed under an everlasting curse, from the effects of which

nothing but the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God could save them.

No sooner had the justice of God visited the disobedience of Adam and Eve with expulsion from paradise, than a long train of evils, from which they had been originally exempt, came to aggravate the misery of their fall, by adding positive suffering to the privation of felicity. Laborious exertion, liability to disease, and the certainty of death, were but physical types of their great moral taint and its eternal punishment. By obtaining a triumph over the original parents of mankind in paradise, Satan established his accursed empire over their descendants, and by seducing them from their allegiance to God into rebellion, he acquired an unhallowed dominion, which he has ever since been permitted to exercise in this world, as prince of the power of the air. The heart of man was now exposed to those attacks, which were no longer warded off by the immediate communion with God, vouchsafed to him, while an

innocent inhabitant of the garden of Eden. Paradise was a fortress belonging to the Lord of hosts, which Satan had indeed successfully invaded, with intent to destroy, but in which he was never permitted to assume the tone of command. It was a stronghold of purity, from which the dupe and the deceiver, the rebel, and the instigator to rebellion, were alike excluded. The angel with a flaming sword, guarded its hallowed precincts from profane intrusion; and fallen man, thrust beyond its safe barrier, his soul deprived of the divine communion, and his body far removed from the healing influences of the tree of life, was left to languish in that world where Satan had established his kingdom, and where, with dispositions to go astray and a heart alienated from God, he became an easy prey to the destroyer.

But under the humiliating circumstances of his fall, man was not left without the hope of restoration to the divine favour; and a remedy was held out to

him, which, if received with simple faith, should be the means of alleviating present suffering, by the hope of future blessedness. A gracious promise was given by God of a Saviour, "the seed of the woman," who should bruise the head of the infernal serpent, the tempter and destroyer. This revelation, vouchsafed in the most ancient of prophecies, gave a ray of hope to our first parents, which became gradually more and more bright by successive announcements, increasing like the light of the morning dawn, until at length the Sun of Righteousness arose with healing on his wings. While man continued in a state of innocence, we read of no sacrifices being made; it was not until he had offended God, that he took of the firstlings of his flocks to offer up an atonement for sin, in reference to the future sacrifice of this holy "seed of the woman," who was to be bruised in his victorious conflict with the Satanic serpent. The offering up of sacrifices in early days by the patriarchs, and in later

times by the priests of the Hebrew nation, was a profession of faith and of acquiescence in the way appointed by God of saving sinners, by the shedding of the blood of his Son. And it was a means of grace, whereby the covenant relation between God and man was renewed and confirmed. And those who performed sacrifices after their own fancies, and without observing the manner of the divine appointment, lost all the benefit of the act, and provoked the displeasure of the Almighty. Of this, we have a remarkable instance in the widely-different reception which awaited the sacrifices of Abel and of Cain. The reason why the Lord had respect unto Abel and his offering, while unto Cain and his offering He had no respect, was, that Abel performed his sacrifice in the way of the divine appointment, by shedding of blood, with a view to the Messiah's atonement, on which, though seen, perhaps, darkly and dimly, we may suppose that his eye of faith confidently rested. Whereas, Cain, by offering up

the fruits of the ground, performed a mere act of will worship, a sacrifice of his own invention, which the Almighty would not accept. As inheritors of the fallen nature of Adam, neither Cain nor Abel were worthy to have communion with God; but both might have approached Him with faith, using the type of the future atonement, which divine mercy put within their reach. This Abel did, by shedding the blood of the firstlings of his flocks; but this Cain refused to do, when he pleased his own fancy, by bringing a sacrifice, which had no allusion to that, without which there is no remission of sin. Thus, the one was accepted, and the other was rejected. The difference between them was as great as that which exists between him, who, trusting to Christ's merits and intercession, comes to God as a reconciled Father, and him, who offers up a prayer to the Almighty, as the Author of nature, the great First Cause.

No view of history can be so false as

that which teaches that the ancestors of our race ascended by slow and painful steps, from the savage wildness of the woods, to a state of semi-barbarism, and from thence onwards, to the grade of civilization to which the nations of the world have respectively attained. A change from rudeness to refinement has indeed marked the progress of most nations with which we are acquainted; and from the want of authentic history, the researches of common minds are there terminated. But to those who will or can, bestow the time, labour, and expense, which such investigation requires, it will be found that behind this dreary waste of barbarism, distinct traces are unfolded of a splendid civilization, extending over regions the most remote from each other, remounting to a period of countless antiquity, and equalling, if not surpassing, that, in the possession of which we feel so proud. The enlightened and patient investigation of the present day, is even now, extracting proofs of the aboriginal,

and almost universal, civilization of the old world, from countries apart as the Antipodes, and which have not hitherto been regarded as connected by any common affinity. The monuments of Egypt are now telling us the tale of a mighty, and rich, and highly-civilized monarchy, with all the peculiar institutions and ceremonies which indicate a polished state of society, within a few centuries of the era of the flood. The ancient tombs of a wonderful extinct people, within a day's journey of these gates, disclose proofs of ancient civilization, little less remote and little less wonderful, which has existed in Italy, ages and ages before the times which we regard as old. And even in that vast continent which we, unthinkingly, denominate the new world, temples of colossal size and the ruins of noble structures, with endless sculptures and architectural ornaments, point to a time of wealth and art, coeval perhaps with Etruria or Egypt, or Tyre or Babylon. Even amid the wilds of the far west of

North America, in those uncultivated regions where the Indian roams in freedom, have immense substructions of cities been recently found, which teach us how little we know of the annals of this earth, and how puny is that pride, which would make Europe of the nineteenth century the culminating point of the world's civilization.

It is delightful, when the discoveries of intelligent observation, guided by sound learning, thus bring forth new evidence of the truths recorded in the book of life. We have every reason to believe that man came forth from his Maker's hand, not an ignorant, half-reasoning savage ; but the most perfect specimen of our race, beautiful beyond the fairest models of Grecian symmetry, and with a mind stored with that knowledge which fitted him for deriving the greatest advantage from the earth where he was to rule. And the facts which I have ventured to state to you, confirm this, by showing that the nearer we remount to the great

origin of nations, the more clearly do we find that knowledge, power, and wealth, were widely spread. These were, indeed, from time to time obscured, and even partially obliterated, by the barbarism of races, whom, early separation from the great original family, in consequence, it may be, of crime or individual rudeness or ignorance, and a settlement in ungenial and sterile regions, unfavourable to the maintenance or further development of intellect, had gradually reduced to a mean and brutal condition.

But from what little information the sacred narrative gives us of the state of mankind prior to the deluge, they seem less likely to have undergone this physical or social degeneracy. From the extended lives of the antediluvian patriarchs, it is improbable that secular knowledge and proficiency in the arts which adorn life, could ever have been, in any great degree, extinct over the face of the earth. We know, indeed, that all flesh had corrupted its way; but, in all

probability, this very corruption may have manifested itself in the vices consequent upon over-refinement and excessive luxury. In the short record which we have of the early days of the earth, the descendants of Cain, the first murderer, make a more conspicuous figure, as being the mighty of the land, than the posterity of Seth, through whom the chosen seed was transmitted. They had probably soon given themselves up to idolatry, into which the worship of the Supreme Being is so apt to degenerate, when it is not kept alive by faith, and when it is not performed in the way of the divine appointment. We have seen that Cain's homage was a mere act of will-worship, such as God would not deign to accept, and it was probably transmitted to his descendants, who, from bowing down before an unknown God, soon began to offer incense to false gods. And we may imagine, not without reasonable grounds, that some of Tubal Cain's instructions to artificers in brass and iron, had refer-

ence to the making of graven and molten images. The sons of Cain appear to have excelled in the arts of civilization. He was himself the builder of a city, and among his posterity we find those who were distinguished for wealth in herds of cattle, those who were well skilled in music and in the use of complicated instruments, and those who had applied the metals to the useful and ornamental purposes of life. These particulars, though scanty, are sufficient to give us some idea of the civilization of the old world, and to show that in it, the ability, wealth, and ingenuity of the Cainites were preeminent. So true it is, that the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.

Of the descendants of Seth, we have but a brief notice. Their generations, indeed, are carefully marked, so that the descent of the promised seed of the woman may be traced with accuracy. But their lives, and their relative position to the rest of the world, are points on which we

are left in ignorance. Concerning several of them, however, such as Enoch and Lamech, we know what is most important, that they were believers in God, and that they confessed their faith in a world of corruption. Enoch, we know to have been a holy adorer of the Most High, walking with God. St. Jude tells us, too, that he was a preacher of righteousness, warning the men of his generation of the wrath to come, and denouncing the judgments by which their ungodly deeds and impious words should be punished. And we know that God took him, thereby testifying to his contemporaries his approbation of his conduct, and by his translation to heaven, giving them a convincing proof of the existence of the invisible world, and of a future state of recompense. We can hardly imagine that his exhortations should have produced no effect upon the world, or at least upon those of his own family and race; and it is not unlikely that his preaching may have checked

among the descendants of Seth, the influence of the wicked and worldly wise children of Cain, who probably were the mighty, and the able, and the clever of the earth.

Immediately before the events of the deluge, a circumstance is recorded, which is of itself, sufficient to account for the rapid increase of depravity on the face of the earth. "And it came to pass, when men began to multiply, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and they took unto them wives of all which they chose." (Gen. vi.) The meaning of this appears to be, that the children of Seth, who continued to worship the living God, and are thus styled his sons, began to contract alliances with the wicked and profane posterity of Cain, and thereby became demoralized. These unhallowed marriages produced, as their consequence, an almost universal apostasy, until "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the

earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created, from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air, for it repenteth me that I have made them.” (Gen. vi.)

And let us consider, my brethren, of whom all this is said? Who were they whose wickedness was so great on the earth? Of whom is it said that it repented the Lord that he had made them, and it grieved him in his heart? It was those, who, as our blessed Saviour, in the words of the text, characterizes the inhabitants of the earth in the days of Noah, “did eat and drink, and marry wives, and were given in marriage.” In other words, it was those who were exclusively addicted to the enjoyments of sense, and immersed in the pursuits of time. Our

Lord imputes to them, neither atrocious wickedness nor shocking scandal. He does not stigmatise them as a race wholly composed of murderers, adulterers, covenant-breakers, or injurious. He, on the contrary, lays to their charge thoughtlessness of that, which, although they regarded it not, yet did most essentially concern them. He lays to their charge an inordinate fondness for this world and the things of this world. "They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage." Doubtless among them there were many, very many, of the grosser violators of God's laws; and it is probable that part of the sin of the rest was not viewing these with sufficient detestation. But the fault for which he blames the mass, was a love of themselves and of their own interests, and a forgetfulness of God. And this description is fearfully accurate, when applied to the world around us. Were the truth to be written of the state of the civilized nations of Europe before God,

it would not be said that they were universally stained with gross vice, and cruelty, and injustice; but it would be truly said that they have not God habitually in their thoughts, and that they are entirely engrossed with their own interests and pleasures. May not we, therefore, justly fear lest the curse pronounced by God, upon our antediluvian predecessors, should also rest upon us? And let us not seek to shelter ourselves behind a display of respectability and external decency, which many assume, who are dead before God. To judge from the terms of our Saviour's accusation, there may have been many such persons before the flood, whose guilt consisted not in any gross scandal, but in an overweening worldly wisdom, and who yet were not saved, because of their good repute among men, but were rolled away by the waves of the same flood that engulfed the murderer, the idolater, and the adulterer.

But let us, with all our hearts, seek for

shelter near Christ, the rock of our salvation ; let us cling to the foot of the cross ; let us direct our eyes unto Him, who is thereon raised, in order to cure our spiritual disorders, even as the brazen serpent was held up to heal the wounds of the Hebrew people. The arm of God's long-suffering mercy is yet extended towards us, let us thankfully receive the offered gift of salvation. Let us earnestly pray for admission into the ark of Christ, his holy Church, which alone can bear us over the waters of destruction, to a haven of rest and security. The conduct of the inhabitants of the old world, which provoked God to exchange his long-suffering for vengeance, is imitated by those among us, who continue deaf to his invitation to lay down the burden of our sins at the foot of Christ's cross. And as that vengeance came upon them with a terrible flood, and utterly swept them away, a similar destruction is awaiting us, if we do not avail ourselves of the appointed means of grace, that reality, of

which they, to their ruin, despised the figure. The ark was presented to them as the means of escape from impending danger, and Noah was sent to them as a preacher, to warn them to embark in that safe asylum. But they refused, and were destroyed. Thus, Christ is set forth to you, as the only mode of salvation from the eternal wrath of God, and the servants of the altar are sent to warn you to cling to your Saviour; and if you refuse to obey these warnings, nothing remains for you, but the overwhelming wrath of the Almighty. And of the way in which Christ is offered to us, the ark is a figure peculiarly appropriate; for, while we are tracing the spiritual fulfilment of the history of the fate of the old world, we must not forget that the outward and visible christian church is especially typified, by the shelter which protected the professing believers of the household of Noah. All those who entered it not, suffered loss; they were swept from off the face of the world; they were not in

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covenant with the Almighty ; they were not partakers of the high privileges of its inmates. Yet, we should not venture to say that none of them were saved eternally. On the contrary, we may hope that the rich mercy of God reached very many, whose error lay in ignorance, having an imperfect notion of the obedience which God required ; or who died during the years wherein the ark was preparing ; or who, even amid the billows of the flood, lifted up their voices to God, in the penitent prayer of a heart truly converted to Him. In like manner, of those men who entered the ark, all were not the true and faithful servants of God ; the subsequent conduct of Ham leads us to have no doubt as to the state of his wicked and unconverted heart. Yet he joined in the same act of outward obedience with the rest of his family, and with them, shared in the same privilege, as a member of the church.

In these days of latitudinarian religious profession, the glorious privileges and

the awful responsibilities of members of the christian church are often undervalued. And, therefore, it is the duty of the preacher, to omit no opportunity of enforcing the necessity of definite and strict views on the subject. We see multitudes without the church, who delude themselves with an idea that, on account of a similarity in their doctrine, they are actually members of it: and even within its sacred enclosure, we are grieved by the erroneous or inconsistent ideas of those, who are looked up to as teachers, but who, themselves, have little idea of why they are churchmen, or of the obligation on all who are not, to become so. The ark which saved Noah, is a type of the outward and visible church. It contained the clean and the unclean, the converted and the unconverted. All those who entered it, were doing their duty and obeying God, and Ham was not excluded from its asylum, though, as he afterwards turned out an open sinner, the privileges and means of grace and instruction, which

he had enjoyed, all tended to add to his load of guilt. His sins, committed after his signal preservation, were of a deeper stain than those of which he may have been guilty, previous to the deluge, because they were committed in spite of the hand of the Lord stretched out to save him. Even so, are the sins of a baptized man, a member of the outward church of Christ, of a very different nature from those of one, who has never been made an heir of the kingdom of heaven. And that very numerous class of teachers, who lose sight of this distinction, and who sink the difference between an unbaptized and a baptized state, are guilty of withholding a most important part of divine revelation, and have but a very imperfect title to the commendation of "workmen that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Tim. ii. 15.) Thus setting out with an erroneous view of the beginning of the spiritual nature, the engrafting into the church; they regard in a light equally

erroneous, the church itself, and the food of the church, the other sacrament generally necessary to salvation, of the body and blood of our Saviour.

The church of Christ, of which the ark of Noah was a figure, is, like it, outward and visible. Those who are its members, are entitled to unspeakable privileges of grace and spiritual advantage, which are no where promised to those without its pale, who must all, in some way, suffer loss, for not belonging to it. The measure of that loss will be dealt by Almighty justice and Almighty mercy. Among the tens of thousands who live and die, even in a Christian land, apart from the church, there are separatists of every degree; some, willingly and wantonly, glorying in their deed; others unwillingly, but conscientiously, following a painful, though mistaken, sense of duty; others, as it were, involuntarily, following that creed and those forms, which their ancestors have chosen for them, and observing the modern traditions which, with

them, stand in place of those of primitive antiquity. How different the motive, how dissimilar the tone of mind of these various classes, who yet agree in abstaining from the full blessings which Christ confers upon his church, and who seek to draw the waters of life, in channels formed by the hand of man, instead of coming to that pure fountain, which God himself has opened in this wilderness ! O may the fervent prayers of the church ever ascend to the throne of grace, in behalf of those who will not join in prayer with her and through her, but who seek to worship God in ways of their own ! Yet may their prayers be heard, in a way that they seek not and expect not, and may grace be vouchsafed to them, which will lead them in penitence, back to the arms of that mother, from whom they have strayed, or from whom they have held back in cold estrangement !

May we remember that however awful the narrative of the extirpation of a world

may be, it is still as nothing, in comparison with that which each one of us is destined, one day, actually to witness. We shall, each of us, behold the dread scene of the world's final doom. We shall see the great white throne filled by the Judge, from before whose face the heavens and the earth shall fly away, like a scroll rolled together. We shall see the dead, small and great, stand before God, and we shall see the books of his record opened, and the dead judged according to their works, which are inscribed in these books. And we shall behold the sea give up the dead which are in its abyss, and the charnel-house and the shades deliver up their dead, and we shall see the whole of mankind judged impartially, according as their works have been. Nor shall we be mere passive spectators. Our share in the last grand drama of the world shall be one of fearful and important activity, for we too shall hear the blast of the archangels' trump, warning each of us to take our

places among the ranks of the quick and the dead, who crowd around the tribunal. And there we ourselves shall be judged according to our works. Awful words! What are our works? Can they bear the test? shall not they be found wanting? Shall we not find ourselves weighed down to destruction by an overwhelming load of guilt? Our hope of rescue from such a fate is, that He who is to judge us, has already opened for us an asylum from the wrath, with which He is, on that day, to burst forth against his adversaries. Such must have been our fate, had not He, before whom we are then to appear, given us, even now, an invitation, to lay all our burdens at his feet, with the assurance that He will bear them. Seek ye the Lord while yet He may be found, call upon Him, while yet He is near. Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. Flee from the wrath to come, while yet the axe is only laid to the root of the tree, before it has begun to strike; while as

yet, the chaff and the wheat are mixed together upon the threshing-floor of this world, and ere the fan has made the fatal separation. Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand : Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die ? The Lord yet waits to be gracious to you, if you will not spurn the offered mercy.

When the day arrives which we have just been considering, we shall all be received by our Judge, either with a frown of wrath or a smile of welcome. How apt are we to be encouraged or disheartened by a smile or a frown from an earthly benefactor or patron, on whose good graces we depend for prosperity, or who has it in his power materially to injure us ! But what shall be our feelings, when we are waiting to receive that smile or frown, on which is to depend the blessedness or the woe of eternity ! Yet, even before we look upon the face of our Judge, conscience will declare to us our coming doom. The humble assurance of faith will cheer the heart of

the Christian, amidst the terrors of the last day; for he knows that the Lord who is to judge him, is the same who poured out his soul to death on the cross for him, and who interceded for him in his heavenly glory. He believes that he is not a withered and broken twig, but a living branch, supported and fed by a living root, even Jesus, the root and offspring of David. While, on the contrary, the dreadful terrors of approaching condemnation shall make the guilt-stricken heart to quake, from the moment that the trumpet-sound has raised him from the tomb. The agonies of a despairing death-bed shall be renewed to the sinner; or if he has had no bands in his death, then at least, he shall find what it is to believe without hope. The fearful are placed by St. John, at the head of a long list of those, who are to have their portion in the lake that burns with unquenchable fire. Both these and the humbly confident shall be ranged round the judgment-seat, and then the sentence shall

go forth with irresistible power, hurling terrible ruin on the one class, and breathing on the other, heavenly peace. "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world." (St. Matt. xxv.) Contrast these sentences, which shall be pronounced by the unerring Judge, and look upon them as about to be executed upon yourselves, for one or other of them shall be yours. And then hesitate not to resign yourselves, with every energy and faculty of your souls, to Him who alone can save you, and who only will do so, if you consecrate yourselves to Him without reserve. Have the lintels and doorposts of your hearts sprinkled with the blood of the Lamb of the new covenant, and then, on that great day of vengeance and of power, the destroying angel will not only pass you over unhurt, but will guide you to everlasting happiness.

In the midst of the general corruption and carelessness, which caused the Almighty to pronounce a sentence of destruction against the world which He had made, one man is honourably distinguished, from the great mass of his contemporaries. And this man was Noah, who found grace through faith. We are told by St. Paul, that "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." (Hebrews xi. 7.) The Lord, by immediate revelation, made known to this father of a new world, his purposes of vengeance, and warned him to be prepared: These things were not seen as yet, still Noah did not stagger through unbelief. He did not say that an event so far out of the ordinary course of nature as the deluge, was impossible; nor did he, with a specious worldly humanity, presume to decide that such a measure

of punishment was incompatible with his notion of the mercies of God. With simple faith, he received the divine communication, and expected that in due time, a deluge should come, to fulfil the unfailing word of truth. And being aware that delay would only involve him in the threatened calamity, he employed himself with alacrity, to prepare any means of deliverance which God should see fit to appoint for him. Accordingly, when commanded to build an ark, he obeyed, without hesitating on account of the enormous expense, the excessive trouble, and the ridicule which his undertaking would excite amongst the unbelieving, who doubtless regarded his singular conduct as the result of visionary enthusiasm or of madness. But he obeyed, and became the heir of righteousness, not having his own righteousness, but that which is of God through faith.

What a contrast did not the life of Noah exhibit to that of his ungodly neighbours! They did eat and drink,

they married and were given in marriage, they bought and sold. So, indeed, did Noah himself; but he did these things lawfully, and in subordination to the one thing needful. He did eat to support nature, but then he knew that, though "meats were made for the belly and the belly for meats, the Lord would destroy both it and them." (1 Cor. vi.) He himself married, and he gave his sons in marriage, yet he knew that (notwithstanding the long space of existence granted to the antediluvian race) he was hastening to another world "where they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God." (St. Matt. xxii.) He necessarily bought and sold in the lawful intercourse of life; but he did not, with the complacency of a worldly mind, centre his hopes and wishes upon "buying and selling and getting gain." He did all in subordination to his duty to his Maker, saying, "if the Lord will." (St. James iv.) Noah was, among the men of his generation, a

rare instance of one who sought "first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," (St. Matt. vi.) being filled with a firm persuasion that "all else needful should be added unto him." Being thus separated from his fellow-sinners by the great barrier of godly fear and godly love, he could derive but small satisfaction from intercourse with persons whose maxims, sentiments, and habits could have no congeniality with his, and to whom his conduct must have been a lasting and severe reproof. We are, moreover, told by St. Peter, that he was a "preacher of righteousness." In this office he appears to have been generally unsuccessful, as no one alive, at the time of the flood, beyond the circle of his own family, seems to have been converted through his means. And we may be sure that his exhortations and warnings to "repent, for now the axe was laid to the root of the tree," must have still further exposed him to the dislike of his godless contem-

poraries, whom the example of his holy life had already put to the blush.

But a considerable portion of his long life was devoted to an engrossing object, which alone, must have deprived him, in a great measure, of the sympathies of the faithless world. No stumblingblock is so great as singularity. This it was, that armed the violence of heathen Rome against the early Christians, who refused to associate the deities of the Pantheon with the triune Jehovah. This it is, that produces the sneers and taunts of the profane of our own time, against the truly pious and strict. And this same spirit, easily irritated by any peculiarity which casts reproach upon ourselves, must have been excited by the diligence with which Noah executed the Divine command, in the great work to which he devoted a hundred and twenty years. This was the construction of an ark of durable materials and enormous dimensions, which God commanded him to build for the

purpose of keeping alive the seed both of man and beast upon the earth, in contemplation of the coming destruction. As a preacher of righteousness, he must have warned all to flee from the wrath of the Most High, and he must have invited them to turn unto the Lord, and to co-operate with him in his undertaking, giving evidence of the same faith with himself, and thereby to become, like him, heirs of the righteousness which is by faith. But they were deaf to his exhortations, and scorning his rebukes, they turned from the hand which pointed to the means of escape.

We may conceive the wonder which this stupendous work must have excited, and the incredulous contempt with which the preacher of righteousness was regarded, when he pointed to it as a means of escape, and urged his contemporaries to follow his example, and give proof of a similar faith. But, my brethren, this scene is reacted before your eyes, by those who, unreprieved by the fate of their

antediluvian predecessors, go on eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, buying and selling, as if this world were alone eternal and valuable, and as if the next world were nothing more than the dream of a feverish fancy. And an ark is even now prepared, and that ark is the church of Christ, capable of containing all who will enter in, a gate of mercy whose portals are opened wide to all those who knock ; and whose threshold, sprinkled with the blood of the Lamb of God, alone can stay the smiting arm of the destroying angel. When we read the narrative of the fate of the old world, the actual state of the world wherein we live, and its future prospects, seem described in glowing terms. The sinful and careless multitude are following after their own ways, manifold in direction, but all leading away from God, whose fear they have shaken off, or of whom they have ceased to think. Destruction is about to overtake them, and still they go on, heedless and contemptuous. An

ark is prepared by Christ, his church ; and his servants, whom He has solemnly set apart and commissioned for that purpose, exhort the people to seek shelter within its precincts. “ But they make light of it, and go their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise, and some take his servants and entreat them spitefully.” (St. Matt. xxii.) Some refuse to enter in, because they renounce the allegiance of Christ, and prefer the wages of sin. Some refuse to enter in, because they profess to serve Christ more effectually and more spiritually after their own ordinances, and “ having itching ears, heap to themselves teachers ” of their own appointment, who lead them astray, or give them but partial views of God’s truth. Some profess to enter in, but by their deeds belie that profession, and are still without, aliens from God. Some enter in, but speedily come out again, to return to their old ways ; and some spend their lives irresolute at the threshold, in suspense between two

opinions, now bending the knee to Baal, and now calling upon the name of the Lord. And the state of such as I have described among ourselves, is infinitely more dangerous, than was that of the people of the old world. For in a land of professing Christians, the obstinate or the thoughtless, in following their own ways, sin against light, despise glorious privileges, and reject means of grace, such as were never vouchsafed to sinners before the flood. Let us ever bear in mind the high privileges and also the awful responsibility connected with that holy rite, by which we were made members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. O let us not tear asunder that union, let us not deny that paternity, let us not despise that heritage ! And if we have, in times past, done so, let us turn like the prodigal, and be converted, and Christ will heal us, and restore us to our birthright in his ark, the Church.

Alas, how truly is the prediction of St. Peter fulfilled even amongst our-

selves ! “ There shall come in the last days, scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, where is the promise of his coming ? For since the Fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were, from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water, whereby the old world that then was, perished.” Next follows the threatened vengeance :—“ But the heavens and the earth that are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. For the day of the Lord shall come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up.” And here follows the practical instruction to be derived from these terrible truths, which must also have been the substance of the

exhortations of the preacher of righteousness in the old world ;—" Seeing that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be, in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of the Lord ?" (2 Peter iii.) But the preaching of Noah was not crowned with success. May the Lord, in his mercy, grant an effectual blessing to the voices which are now heard in his church, crying, " Flee from the wrath to come. Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and ye shall be saved !" May they call many, who are wandering in errors both of practice and opinion, who are pleasing themselves and not living for the glory of God, who are serving their own desires and their own views, instead of inquiring simply what is the will of the Lord ; into that sure asylum which will bear them, if they enter it with honest and true hearts, safe over the floods of destruction, into the reconciled presence of their heavenly Father !

When the Lord decreed to destroy the world, He said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man, yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years." (Gen. vi. 3.) The long period yet assigned for their continued existence, illustrates the mercy of God's dealings with his creatures, who willeth not that any should perish; and who, even in pronouncing a general doom, left ample space for individual repentance and reformation. They might have availed themselves of this lengthened period, to imitate the example of Noah. "The long-suffering of God," says St. Peter, "waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water." (1 Peter iii.) And this long-suffering mercy was not, we may suppose, bounded, by assigning a lengthened period, wherein repentance should be preached and opportunity given, to escape from the wrath to come. It is highly probable that very many of the inhabitants of the earth did

actually turn unto the Lord, whose lives were not prolonged until the time of the flood, but who died previously, at peace with God. We know, for example, from the dates which are given by Moses in the book of Genesis, that Methuselah, the oldest man that ever lived upon the earth, died immediately before the flood. We may also in charity hope, that among those that perished, some may have turned sincerely to the Lord, during the progress of the great calamity, and their souls may have entered into rest, after their violent and premature death. Many also, as in the cases of the inhabitants of remote heathen lands in our own day, may have died in ignorance of the full extent of God's law and requirements, and unaware of the coming judgment. To them we may apply the consoling words of St. Paul, that those "who have not the law, and do by nature the things contained in the law, are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bear-

ing witness, and their thoughts accusing or else excusing one another." (Romans ii. 14, 15.) The deluge was an immense national judgment. It is only in this world, that God deals with mankind as nations ; in eternity, He deals with them as individuals. And as many persons are, more or less, innocently included in such national judgments, who will be mercifully dealt with as individuals, we may cherish the hope, that to many, the awful chastisement of the flood was the end of misery.

At the appointed time, after the mercy of Heaven had been stretched to its utmost limit, Noah entered the ark ; and his doing so must have appeared to the godless world to be, in all its absurdity, the consummation of human folly. His contemporaries and neighbours, who had, all along, ridiculed his piety and morality, and scorned his rebukes, must now, upon witnessing this last insane act, have thought that they had gained a signal triumph over him or perhaps they may

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have pitied him, with a remnant of good-natured concern; at the same time, that they congratulated themselves on being delivered from his presence, no more to be plagued with his troublesome preaching, his importunate invitations to turn to God, and his impertinent animadversions on their conduct and pursuits. When they looked up to the skies and saw that all was clear, and when they consulted those who were skilled in atmospheric phenomena, and found that no natural appearance portended any change, they must have curled the lip in scorn, and applauded their own sound sense and superior wisdom, which had firmly resisted all the fantastic and visionary appeals of the preacher. “Noah went into the ark, and it came to pass, after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth, and all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.” (Gen. vii.) What must now have been their feelings, when the incessant rain poured

down in torrents ; when the waves of the sea left their ocean beds, and made terrific inroads upon the mainland ; when the lakes became as seas ; the rivers began to roll along like broad estuaries, and the mountain streams rushed down their rocky channels, with the swollen fury of cataracts ? What, they would begin hesitatingly to say,—what if this despised preacher were to be, after all, in the right ? But they would strive to repel the idea, as the suggestion of weak-minded cowardice, and to hope that all would soon be well. They would accordingly, flee from the plain, and seek the peaks of the mountain ridge ; they would leave the suburbs, and run to the battlements of the towers and the pinnacles of the temples. But all in vain. The lashing surges increase in fury, they sweep away the strongholds, in which the miserable, perishing mortals confided, and men and towers and pinnacles, fall together in a headlong crash of ruin. In the frenzy of despair, they cling to the altars

of their idols, cutting themselves, tearing their hair, beating their breasts, and crying, O Baal, hear us, O Baal, hear us! They then, perhaps, turn to the true God, with prayers for deliverance from this great destruction. But they were answered with these words, set down in the record of truth, which should cause the sinner's inmost soul to quake. "Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hands, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsels, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish come upon you: then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer, they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me." (Prov. i. 24, &c.)

We may figure to ourselves a group of Noah's countrymen, who had scoffed at his work and rejected his invitations, but

now subdued by sadness and awed by despair, perched on the highest eminence of a mountain, and watching with agony the increasing violence and rapid encroachments of the waves; when suddenly they descry the much-derided ark, sailing in majesty, over the stormy deep, upheld from sinking by the special providence of God, and bearing in its bosom, the seeds of a new and beautiful world. What would they give, to be permitted to join their fates to those of its secure inmates! But it is too late; the choice which they had made, has fixed their doom. While the ark was preparing, they might have secured a place in it; but, from the moment that it began to float upon the face of the waters, the day of trial was past, and the season of hope was over.

Such, my brethren, will one day be our own feelings, if we do not now obey that voice of mercy which calls from the cross; turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die? The

Lord yet waiteth to be gracious unto you. Now, is the appointed time, now, is the day of salvation. Now, the number of guests at the feast of the marriage supper of the Lamb is making up : make haste then, and linger not, lest, when you come to the door, crying, Lord, Lord, open unto us, He answer and say ; verily I say unto you, I know you not. As the perishing world, during the flood, saw the ark, conveying in triumph, over the stormy deep, the small but faithful band of heirs of righteousness which is by faith ; so shall those whodie unreconciled to God through Christ, behold, at the last day, his elect people ascending on clouds of glory, to take possession of the incorruptible inheritance which is theirs, as heirs of righteousness. And as the miserable beings whom the deluge was overwhelming, probably made signals to Noah for help, but made them in vain ; so shall the heirs of glory, on their heavenward progress, in reply to the despairing cries of the finally

condemned, repeat their Divine Master's words, addressed to the unbelieving Jews, "Whither we go, ye cannot come."

My brethren, Christ is now in heaven, preparing an abiding mansion, a glorious inheritance for you, if you will accept it. Close then, with the offer, receive the proffered mercy, and be for ever blessed. Be on the watch, with your loins girded, and your lamps trimmed, and your lights burning. "For, of that day and hour, (how soon it may come) knoweth no man. But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark ; and knew not, until the flood came and took them all away ; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." (St. Matt. xxiv.) Therefore, be ye also ready, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. Amen.

SERMON VI.

THE SOUL IN ITS DISEMBODIED STATE.

ST. LUKE XXIII. 42, 43.

“ And he said unto Jesus, Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”

HERE, my brethren, is an instance of repentance, at the sounding of the twelfth hour. Yet, though this example is given us of conversion at the very moment of death, the circumstances of the case were so peculiar, as to cause it to stand alone in the sacred record, and to prevent it from ever being rightly cited, as an ordinary precedent in the christian church. We know

nothing of the previous life of the dying malefactor ; he is introduced to our notice, when just about to resign his spirit. All that we do know of him is, that in the briefest possible space, he displayed the substance of the chief christian graces, which, if time had been granted him, would doubtless have been embodied in the actions of a christian life.

Conscious of his own sins, and of the justice of his condemnation, and aware of the divine claims of Jesus Christ ; while witnessing his extraordinary majesty, meekness and magnanimity in suffering, he seems to have been led by the Divine Spirit, to recognize in him, the promised Messiah ; and his newly awakened faith anxiously sought to apply the virtue of his sufferings to his own extreme necessity. The wonderful prophecies of Isaiah may have flashed across his mind, and impressed it with the conviction, that the agonized and afflicted one, who so patiently, though unjustly, shared the punishment righteously inflicted upon himself,

was no other than He, who was promised to be wounded for the transgressions, and bruised for the iniquities of the human race, and on whom was to be laid the heavy wrath of God, to atone for the guilt of man.

When he loudly declared our Lord's innocence, he implied his belief that he was indeed, the Son of God, the King of Israel ; and though he saw him at the extremity of mortal agony, about to expire on the accursed tree, he believed him to be the Lord of eternal salvation, the King of an everlasting empire, and the dispenser of endless life. He therefore, humbly entreated that he would remember him, when he should come into his kingdom. He was humbled in penitence, he believed on Christ, in his heart unto righteousness, and he made confession of him with his mouth unto salvation, at a time, when all around were deriding and reviling him, and when even his own disciples were held back by cowardly fear, or began to waver in their faith of his pro-

mised redemption. He showed fear of God, by confessing his guilt, and patiently enduring suffering ; he exercised faith and hope in Christ, and zeal for his honour ; and he displayed regard for the soul of his fellow-sufferer, and hatred of sin, by faithfully reproving him. He probably honoured Christ more in this short space, than most of those do, who spend a long life in professing his faith ; and he thus gave evidence of meetness for the inheritance of saints, such as probably no death-bed repentance ever exhibited. Therefore, our Lord, without delay, and in the most solemn manner, assured him that on that day, he should be with Him in paradise.

It is to the import of this promise that our attention shall, this day, with the divine blessing, be directed : and this will, of necessity, lead us to the consideration of the soul of man after death, or, in other words, to the separate state.

A certain degree of anxiety concerning our future worldly condition is prudent and

praiseworthy. And no wise man is so engrossed with the cares or pleasures of the present moment, as to turn an indifferent ear to the promise of certain prosperity, or to regard the prospect of loss or suffering without emotion. The assured expectation of princely wealth or renewed vigour, at the end of a term of years, would enable the invalid to endure present sickness, and the poor man to bear up against actual penury ; while the certain prospect of unavoidable ruin or wasting disease, would poison the cup of pleasure, or blanch the cheek of youth and health. Why then, do we view with more languid interest, that far greater and everlasting change, which an hour may bring forth, when the dust shall “ return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God that gave it ? ” We are absorbed in the reality of the present, and we cannot bring ourselves to view it in the fleeting and perishable light, which the experience of truth teaches us, but to which habit has rendered us callous. The thought that

the master delayeth his coming is represented by our Lord, as affording encouragement to the wicked servant in his sinful course ; while the prolonged absence of the bridegroom led the wise virgins, as well as the foolish, to slumber and sleep.

Death is to us practically, the coming of the Lord, the call that the bridegroom is at hand, and that we must go forth to meet him ; yet it always has been, and ever will be, a vain attempt, to persuade men in the prime of life and vigour of health that death is near. Mere men of the world regard death as a plunge from actual existence into an uncertain abyss, where they know not, and perhaps care not, what is to be their state, and concerning which, from its uncertainty, they esteem it worth their while to give themselves but little thought. In health they say, " Let to-morrow be as this day." And when the approach of death, at length, gives them solemn warning to set their houses in order, they either become victims of unchristian terror, and sink into

despair, or else they strive to brave the idea of eternity, by summoning up, at their last hour, all the unbelief which had led them astray during their lives. Or it may be, they endeavour to persuade themselves that all is well with them, on account of some fancied merits, which they foolishly trust may outweigh their offences in the scales of Almighty justice. In the vigour of life, we look for length of days. Amid cares, we are fretted with the crosses of to-day and the events of to-morrow, and look upon the more remote futurity of a separation between soul and body, as a concern almost superfluous. While sipping the cup of pleasure, we delay all serious thoughts until a convenient season, which is never suffered to approach. And when lingering sickness comes, the wasted body and enfeebled mind are generally, incapable of any thoughts beyond the selfish wants and querulous fancies of a sick room. Let us then, my dear brethren, while we have life, and health, and peace of mind granted to us, pray for

wisdom to avoid this dangerous delay, this heedless sporting with our highest interests. Let us live in the fear of God, in order that we may not die consumed with terror, at the idea of meeting him face to face. And let us now contemplate death and the state after death, with earnest attention, in order that we may be enabled, with serious and resigned composure, to approach the borders of the unseen world.

When our frail bodies are consigned to the grave, where is to be the abode of our spirits? Are they to be in a state of peace, of security, of indissoluble union with Christ, and of freedom from sin; or are they to be separated from him, by a great and impassable gulph, and never to be admitted into his reconciled presence? And in what mansion, do now abide the spirits of those friends, who have departed hence, and have left us to toil on in this wilderness, deprived of the solace of their sympathy? In what mansion abide the souls of those who were dearer to us than

life? Where are our rivals, who traversed the paths of our early ambition, but whose love and hatred are now alike buried in the dust? Where are our patrons, our protectors, the tone of whose voice we once anxiously watched, as the fountain of praise or of blame, but which has long been hushed in the silence of the tomb? Where are our dependents, over whom we exercised the sway of authority, or to whom we assumed the tone of counsel or rebuke? They are now removed, alike from our caprice and our kindness, and cannot be recalled from the grave, to do our bidding. The links are broken, however near and intimate they may have been, which bound us to multitudes of our fellow-men; and many of our wisest and best-concerted projects of prudent foresight, no less than the more airy castles of our fancy, have vanished like a thin vapour of smoke.

Let the thought of the numbers, with whom we have tasted life's pains and life's pleasures, in an intimate intercourse

with whom we have rejoiced, on the protection of whom we have depended, on the services of whom we have counted, in the mirth of whom we have gladly partaken, and the tears of whom we have kindly assuaged ; let the thought of the numbers who have acted like ourselves, whose lives have been chequered like our own, whom we have imitated, who have imitated us ; with whom, in short, we have been as completely identified as one man could be with another, and who are all now, tasting that eternal cup which is prepared for ourselves, and which it depends now upon ourselves, to fill with sweet or bitter ingredients.—Let the thought, I say, of this, have a prevailing influence with us, to rouse us from the lethargy of indolence, the dream of pleasure, or the plodding of care ; and to direct our attention to that, which we know we all must be, ere very many years shall, even at the longest computation, have passed over our heads, souls in the separate state.

Imagine to yourselves, my brethren, all the dead, whom you have ever intimately known, assembled once more in your presence. What think you, would be the engrossing theme of their discourse? Eternity. And what, think you, would be the counsel which all of them would be prepared to give? It would assuredly be, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest." Work out your salvation while the time to do it is yet extended to you, for a night cometh unto you, as it has come unto us, wherein God's spirit will no longer work in you, either to will or to do.

The difference betwixt the condition of the disembodied spirit from the moment of death to the day of judgment, and its state after resurrection and judgment, has not, in modern times, been attended to, even by the most pious and thinking of our clergy and laity, in a way commen-

surate with its importance. There is no doubt that as soon as the season of mortal probation is closed by death, our eternal doom is sealed. And there is no possibility of our changing that condition, whether of joy or woe, which has been brought on by our conduct, good or evil, during our earthly journey. But the consummation of that joy or woe is described in scripture, as depending upon an event, which, no less than death, is common to the whole race of man ; the second coming of our Lord in power and great glory. The doctrine of this advent has been made by the apostles of our Saviour, as well as by Himself, the greatest motive to christian circumspection. And although the fate as well of the saint as of the sinner, be finally fixed at the moment of death ; yet it is to the sentence of judgment which is to be pronounced upon the assembled world, that they chiefly directed the attention of those whom they instructed in our most holy religion. The record of divine truth does not indeed often

dwell upon the flight which the solitary soul is destined to take, the moment that it is expelled by death, from the body, into the receptacle called Hades or the shades, where the spirits of the good and of the evil await the day of judgment, in separate mansions, divided by a great gulph, as we learn from the parable of Dives and Lazarus. But that call to attention is of continual occurrence, which warns us that we shall not all sleep, but we "shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump. For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed ; for this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." (1 Cor. xv.)

Our Divine Saviour and the teachers of his religion never dwelt upon death, and passed over, as a point of time, the continuance for a season, of the mouldering body in the grave. Their discourses chiefly tended to prepare their hearers for a great subsequent event, which is to

call all the souls out of the shades, and to unite them once more, to their renewed bodies, and then bring them in solemn array, before the great white throne of judgment. Their most earnest calls were ever made, to induce their disciples to live in expectation of this solemn summons of the archangel's trumpet. Not that preparation for death and preparation for judgment are, in any respect, different; for the day of judgment will follow assuredly, though not immediately, the day of death. To many, indeed, thousands of years have intervened, between the day of their death and the present day, when their souls are still in the shades, and their bodies are still in the dust; and to us now alive, ages may possibly yet intervene, between the solemn moment of our departure hence, and that more awfully solemn one, which is to usher us into the presence of our Judge. Yet as soon as the breath leaves our body, the die is cast, which is to decide for ever, the decree is gone forth, which is to fix our abode in a happy or miserable

eternity. No change after death is practicable, except that variation of degree, which is to remove the soul from the shades and the body from the grave, and is to exalt them, thus united, to the highest heavenly blessedness, or plunge them into the terrible misery of everlasting damnation.

Death, and the separate state after death, are regarded in scripture as the precursors of that day, to a preparation for which, so many awful threatenings warn us, and to a thoughtful consideration of which, the most solemn expressions are used to rouse us. That day, when the great white throne shall be fixed, and the Judge shall sit on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven shall fly away, and there shall be found no place for them. And the dead, small and great, shall stand before God, and the books shall be opened, and the dead shall be judged out of the things which are written in the books, according to their works. And the sea shall give up the

dead which are in it, and death and the shades shall deliver up the dead which are in them, and they shall be judged, every man, according to his works. Passing over death, as a matter of subordinate interest, our Lord, and the inspired teachers of our religion, were accustomed to make use of the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead, as the firmest ground of christian hope, and the strongest motive to christian watchfulness. "The hour is coming, in which, all that are in their graves, shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." (St. John v. 28, 29.) "If the dead rise not," says St. Paul, "then is not Christ raised ; and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins." (1 Cor. xv.)

The whole of divine revelation rests its promises on the resurrection of our Lord, as on an immovable rock, and always exhibits to us our own resurrection, as the

great object of earnest desire and anxious expectation, While, according to the views which, in more modern times, are set forth from our pulpits, there seems to be a disposition to undervalue the resurrection, as if it were of secondary importance, to speak of the body, as if it were the only veil of separation between the saints and Christ, and of death, as of that which immediately raises the soul to the summit of blessedness, or plunges it into the abyss of woe. There is, among many, a disinclination to separate their notion of heaven and hell, from that of the state of the soul, between the death and the resurrection of the body. And from the ordinary tenor of modern preaching, one would be led to believe that the disembodied spirit went immediately into the presence of God, or was immediately thrust into outer darkness. The reason of this tendency among modern divines, to omit the consideration of the separate state of the disembodied soul, may, on the one hand, be traced to the disregard of

the opinion of antiquity, which is our besetting error ; and on the other, to the fear of the superstition of purgatory, which is, in fact, the unscriptural and modern abuse and perversion of a scriptural and anciently-received doctrine of the church. The Christians of primitive times were taught and believed, that there exists a land of souls, different from the heaven of heavens and the nethermost hell, called Hades or the shades ; wherein the spirits of the good and of the evil, in different mansions, and separated the one from the other, by an impassable gulph, await the resurrection ; which is to bring to both classes, the final consummation of the condition in which they die, and in which they continue, in the separate state after death, until the moment, when they “ that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” (Dan. xii. 2.)

This state, the Roman branch of the church has depicted, as one of penance,

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in a place of purifying fire, wherein the soul which is ultimately to be saved, endures suffering for a season, in order to wipe away the stains of earthly defilement. And of this state of penitential imprisonment, the Roman Church professes to have the keys, with a power of abbreviating it, or delivering from it, in a way that appears to be not strictly defined ; for the practical doctrine seems to vary considerably, from the theoretical standard. But be this as it may, the soul, when sufficiently purified, is considered to ascend to the highest heaven, without waiting for its reunion with the body. Besides the extraordinary powers which the Roman Church thus affirms to possess, over the destinies of the unseen world, there seems to be a threefold error in this view of Hades or the separate state, which I have ventured shortly to bring before you. The first error is that, of representing Hades as a place of purgatorial fire. The second is that, of fixing it as a place destined only for those who are to be

finally saved ; whereas, it is the great receptacle of all disembodied spirits, according to the light which we derive from the scripture, and the teaching of the early church on the subject. And the third is that, of describing it as a place destined to contain the good, during only a portion of their disembodied state ; whereas, it contains all souls departed from this life, during the whole period which elapses, between the hour of death and the resurrection.

It will be confessed by all, except partizans and zealots, that many of the ardent spirits who successfully struggled to remove various errors, which the superstition of ages had accumulated on the apostolic foundation, did not give sufficient heed to the working out of their reforms : but in too many instances, removed alike, what was objectionable and what was valuable, rooted out what was true and what was false, and swept away the primitive foundation, along with the more recent edifice which defaced it. As

instances of what I mean, I would adduce, first, the apostolical government of the church, which had been innovated upon, so as to produce an undue supremacy and tyranny ; but which, in most protestant communions, was, together with the innovation, itself swept away. Secondly, the ancient tradition of the Church, a most valuable guide to her sons, teaching them what had been held as her faith, in all times and countries, and by all sound believers. This had been innovated upon, in order to found an authority running down the stream of history, contemporaneously with the church, and competent, at any time, and with regard to any doctrine, to declare her infallible decision, and to impose it upon all. But the ancient tradition was, in most Protestant communions, along with this modern and spurious tradition, forgotten or disregarded. Thirdly, the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, in which his real spiritual presence was anciently believed, and to the validity of which, priestly

consecration was necessary. This had been innovated upon, so as to change the spiritual presence into a total transformation of the outward elements, and a withholding of half of the sacrament from all but the priestly consecrators themselves, who alone received what our Lord designed for all. But many Protestant communions, while they rejected the doctrine of a change in the substance, repudiated all real spiritual presence, making the reception of the sacrament, a mere declaration of conformity; and while they gave the cup to the laity, they gave to the laity likewise, the power of consecrating both the cup and the bread. The next instance which I adduce of indiscriminate rejection of truth and falsehood, on the part of many Protestant communions, is the doctrine which we are now more immediately considering, that of the separate state. This, which was the universal belief of the primitive Church, had gradually become obscured, by the innovations of corrupt doctrine, during the

THIS was well about the time of the
 institution of the idea of purgatory, as it
 was then that became fully developed.
 and the believers acted in this, as in the
 case of which allusion has just
 been made. respecting the innovation, and
 and that is the ancient truth. The
 Church of England pursued an honour-
 able line of distinction from the course
 followed by the Protestant communions.
 Her great struggle in which, with God's
 blessing she has been eminently success-
 ful was to restore ancient truth, and to
 preserve primitive doctrines and forms;
 while she rejected the innovations of
 which the novelty could be demonstrated,
 and the changes which were proved to be
 deviations from primitive institutions and
 traditions.

Thus far I venture to recapitulate for
 the sake of distinctness, the ancient doc-
 trine of a separate state of departed souls
 was asserted by the Church of Rome,
 and she concerning a place of penance,
 where she temporal punishment, left in-

complete at death, was perfected; and over the souls contained therein, the Church possessed a certain, though perhaps not strictly defined, power of binding and setting free. But this state is regarded as being of but temporary endurance, for, daily and hourly, disembodied spirits, liberated by the merits of men and the power of the Church, are received into glory. These modern changes were rejected at the Reformation; but, in rejecting them, many Protestants rejected also the ancient Catholic belief in a separate state; following the same lawless rule of unwarrantable extremes, to which allusion has been already made. And as this spirit, though excluded from the articles and formularies of our Church, has nevertheless occasionally prevailed very extensively, among individual members of the body, it is not wonderful that the Catholic doctrine of a separate state has been forgotten or obscured.

In order to prove that this doctrine of a separate state is scriptural, we will

proceed to adduce reasons drawn from holy writ. First, we know that until after his resurrection, our blessed Lord, who in all things partook of the lot of humanity (sin only excepted), did not ascend to heaven. Jesus said to Mary Magdalene, "I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go unto my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, unto my God and your God." (St. John xx.) The human soul of our Saviour, not having gone to his Father's glory, must (during the three days of its separation from the body) have undergone the fate of the human souls whom he came to save, in order that he might assimilate himself unto us in all things. It descended to Hades or the shades, and being the soul of the Holy One of God, it descended to that division of the separate state, appropriated to the souls that are saved. And into that blessed place, he introduced the soul of the penitent thief, in fulfilment of the promise which he made to him on the cross,

“To-day, thou shalt be with me in paradise.”

Secondly. St. Paul, in the fifth chapter of the second Epistle to the Corinthians, says, “We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this, we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven. If so be, that being clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle, do groan, being burdened, not for that we should be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.” This being unclothed, means the soul in the separate state, after it has put off the earthly house of this tabernacle, or the mortal body; and before it is clothed upon with the house which is from heaven, or with the glorified body, with which it is to be invested before the day of judgment. The being unclothed, that is, the separation

between body and soul, the apostle does not desire. What he desires is, the being clothed upon with the heavenly body, that is, the reunion of body and soul at the resurrection. For the resurrection he earnestly groans, because it will be, to all those that are asleep in Jesus, the joyful consummation of eternal blessedness. For the hour of death he did not groan, because he knew that it was not then, that he should enter into glory. However, he goes on to say, he knew that while "at home in the body, he was absent from the Lord," and that "he was willing to be absent from the body and present with the Lord." Mark the widely-different force of these expressions. He earnestly groaned for the reunion of his soul with his body glorified ; while he denies that this earnest longing was excited by the view of death,—“not that we should be unclothed.” And he adds, that at the same time, he is “willing” (now this is a feeble expression, when compared with “earnestly groaning”) to be absent from

the body, because he should be then, in a more intimate manner than during his mortal life, present with the Lord. And this, doubtless, is the case, as the souls of the saints are, during the interval between death and the resurrection, kept in that place where Christ was with the penitent thief, in the paradise of God. Now it may well fill us with surprise, that the apostle should use language implying only resignation and willingness, concerning the hour of death, if that had been the time of his hoped-for admission into the heaven of heavens.

Thirdly. Another passage of Scripture which may be adduced, as confirming the doctrine of a separate state, is one which is not indeed free from difficulty, and which has been variously interpreted by authorities deserving of respect. I allude to that, in the third chapter of the first Epistle of St. Peter, where it is said, "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in

the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit. By which also, he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited, in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is eight souls, were saved by water." Perhaps the most commonly-received explanation of this passage, and which is held by some authors entitled to respect, is the following; which, however, seems so forced and constrained, that, even were the choice more between difficulties than it really is, one would gladly seek for another. The meaning of St. Peter is by them supposed to be, that the divine Word, through his inspired servant Noah, preached to the antediluvians, who are called spirits in prison, because they were then under the bondage of sin. Others, again, suppose that the expression, spirits in prison, refers to the actual state, in the apostle's time, of those formerly disobedient antediluvians. But that the preaching of Christ to the spirits in prison can

in any sense, mean the preaching of Noah to the inhabitants of the old world, seems too unnatural to be a satisfactory explanation.]

I would premise by saying, that the spirits in prison do not necessarily mean spirits undergoing punishment, or spirits condemned. There is a beautiful address in the prophecies of Zechariah, which expresses such a condition as that here implied. (Zechariah ix. 12.) "Turn ye to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope." The spirits in prison (which expression, I would understand generally of disembodied spirits, in the imperfect or separate state) are of two classes, prisoners of hope, "to whom it is said, that they shall rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren shall be fulfilled;" (Revelations vi. 11;) and prisoners of despair, whose state is that of "fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation." (Hebrews x. 27.) The condition of both classes is fixed, the one for evil, and the other for good; and it

is among the latter only, that the soul of the Saviour can be supposed to have remained, while separated from his body. But to many, who might admit the doctrine of the separate state, and even allow the propriety of the application of the epithet, spirits in prison,—to souls in that state, there may be something startling in the idea of preaching or religious instruction, addressed to those whose season of mortal probation is over. The only change which we can contemplate, as to be effected after death, is increase in intensity, perfection of degree; when the imperfect, because disembodied, spirit, is again united with the body, which, prepared for eternity, will be the vehicle either of the utmost blessedness, or of the utmost woe. But, as we have every reason to believe that the beatified spirit is, while disembodied, in a state of perfect consciousness, we must also believe that its abode in the separate state will be made effectual, in subservience to the gracious designs of Almighty wisdom, to

prepare and fit it for taking that peculiar place, and performing those peculiar offices, in the kingdom of heaven, for which God has destined it. We may, therefore, suppose that the soul which, ere the death of the body, has known and loved Christ, will awake at the resurrection, knowing and loving him still better. And in like manner, we may suppose that the soul of a Gentile, who, though not a hearer, has yet been a doer of the divine law, who did by nature the things contained in the law, and who showed the work of the law written in his heart, and was thus accepted for the sake of Christ; may have, during its abode in the separate state, many religious truths revealed to it, through the ministry, it may be, of blessed angels, of which, at the hour of death, it was ignorant.

If these speculations may be entertained, and I would very humbly express my belief that there is, at least, nothing

in them, subversive of the doctrines of the church of Christ, we may apply them to the state of the millions of antediluvians, who must have perished from the face of the earth, during the hundred and twenty years that the ark was preparing, or in the waters of the great deluge. If the word disobedient, implied a positive rejection of offered mercy on the part of the old world, which brought them all under condemnation, and caused them all to die in unrepented sin, and to be consigned to the prison, where they are even now, looking fearfully forward to judgment and fiery indignation,—then these speculations must of necessity go for nothing. But if, by the word disobedient, the apostle means to mark out, as by a general epithet, (like infidel applied by us to millions who never heard of christian doctrines,) all those in the old world, who did not act as Noah did ; without meaning to assert of them, that all were guilty of a faithless rejection of the fullest light

of divine truth,—then, we may imagine that the condition of many of the antediluvians, to a certain extent, resembled that of the heathen world in our own day ; and that many knew not the truth, because they lacked opportunity, and yet were doers of the divine law, though they knew it not. This, charity would lead us to hope, may have been the state of many before the flood. And to them, in the separate state, where they are kept as prisoners of hope, we may suppose the knowledge of religious truth to be imparted. And the passage which we are considering, would induce us to believe that this knowledge was applied to them by the blessed Saviour himself, during the three nights and three days that his body rested in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.

Throughout the New Testament, the consideration of the day of judgment is made the most powerful motive to Christian circumspection, and the fearful award which is then to decide upon the wills and act of mankind, is constantly brought

forward, as a check to impurity and wickedness. But if the happiness or misery of the soul is to be considered as complete, the moment that it has become, to use the expression of St. Paul, unclothed, or has departed from the body, the blessedness of the judgment day to the justified, and its horrors to the condemned, will be deprived of that intensity, which appears in the sacred writings to be particularly insisted on. Why bring a being, already in the enjoyment of the greatest happiness, down again upon the earth, to receive a sentence which is to pronounce no degree of blessedness of which it has not already been made a sharer? And why call up a sufferer from torment, merely to hear that sentence, which sad experience has already taught him in all its fearful reality? This would be, to make the solemn scenes of the last judgment an empty ceremony. The judgment day will be to both classes, of the saved and of the condemned, the commencement of a new existence. To the

one, it will usher in joys unspeakable and hitherto untasted; while to the other, its most awful terrors will be the forerunners of a misery which no imagination has ever conceived, and before which the heart of the mightiest archangel would quail.

If we are asked, what is the state of departed souls, previous to the day of judgment? Our answer must be, nothing positive is revealed concerning it. It cannot be a state of insensibility, for it is held out by our Lord to the penitent thief, as a reward, and a full consciousness of existence is implied by the words, "I say unto thee, this day thou shalt be with me in paradise." And in the book of the Revelations, there is a remarkable description of the condition of the souls of those who had suffered for the testimony of Jesus. "I saw under the altar, the souls of those that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy

and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth ? And white robes were given unto every one of them, and it was said unto them that they should rest for a little season, until their fellow-servants and their brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." (Rev. vi. 9, &c.) Rest is the state which is here represented, as being enjoyed by those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. And the very expression, fallen asleep, is of itself, incompatible with the summit of heavenly blessedness, as a thing already attained. It is a rest undisturbed by doubts and fears for the future, and enlivened by joy and thankfulness, on account of preservation amid the trials and temptations of life, and deliverance from its troubles ; a holy calm, which regards the past with pious gratitude, and contemplates the future with blissful certainty. Free from the assaults of sin, undisturbed by the approach of sorrow, the sainted soul, secure of its union with

its Saviour, awaits with patience, the accomplishment of the mighty designs of Providence, which shall one day bring about a reunion with its body, renewed and glorified, and fitted to enter into the immediate presence of the Almighty, and there to receive an everlasting crown of joy.

While in this abode of blessed security, the beatified spirit, filled with thankfulness for dangers escaped, waits in patient joy for a crown of glory yet to be revealed ; what shall we say of the woful condition of him, who in present misery, contemplates future anguish ? All the passages of a past life, full of sin and godlessness, will be summoned by his faithful memory to torment him. The perishable nature of the temporal advantages, for the possession of which he has sold his place in God's kingdom, will now strike him in all its reality. Let the lover of pleasure look back from the dark land of the shades, to the gay and sensual life, in which he thought not of God,

thought not of to-morrow, thought not of his own soul. Where are his banquets, his joyous companions, his wanton revelry and intemperate mirth? The echo of the voice of giddy folly, now hushed in the tomb, will ring the death-knell of pleasure on his ear, and force upon him a comparison of the present with the past. O, for one little day of life! O, for one of those moments when God once waited to be gracious! How highly prized would that now be, which was then counted valueless? Time then begins to be rightly estimated, when we are launched on the boundless ocean of eternity.

Let the grave man of worldly wisdom look back from the shades, to his schemes of policy, his well-devised projects of realizing wealth and procuring consequence, and to the reward which had crowned his industry, by elevating him in the scale of this world. Where are now those things which he had alone counted necessary to his happiness? Where are

the innumerable important objects in order to prosecute which, he had neglected the one thing needful? All left behind, in the world from which he has been forced to remove, and to which, in his death-struggle, he clung with agony; for there he left his treasure, and with his treasure was his heart. Let him now compare the valued realities of time with the realities of eternity. This was a comparison which he had often made, while on earth, and its result, in his blinded estimation, was, that the good things of the world alone were real, and that the things of eternity were no better than cunningly-invented fables, or uncertain speculations. They now, however, have changed places; eternity has now assumed the guise of awful reality, while the prized blessings of mortal life have disappeared like a vapour of smoke!

Let the amiable man of the world, the affectionate parent, the good and friendly neighbour, whose excellent qualities have yet, alas! only been earthly, not spring-

ing from love to God ; and whose soul has not been elevated to the eternal fountain of all holy and reverential affection, lift up his eyes in the shades, and compare his desolate, lost estate there, with the happy earthly circle which he once gladdened with his smile, and from which he deservedly received the reward of attachment and gratitude. And is such an one (you will exclaim) to be denied an entrance into the heavenly kingdom, towards which he seemed to be tending, with his good works and his pleasing demeanour ? My friends, nothing can be more just than the sentence of exclusion in his case. His amiable qualities have benefited man, and have met with man's reward of respect and affection. Had they proceeded from the only ennobling and eternally-enduring source, love to God, they would have been followed by an everlasting union in heaven, with Him for whom they had been called forth, while upon earth. He may have been an affectionate parent, an indulgent

master, a generous friend ; but the blessings of his children, retainers, and friends, cannot follow him to the land of shades, unless his good deeds have proceeded from love to God and gratitude to his Saviour. Then, they will, indeed, follow him before the tribunal of eternal justice, and plead in his behalf, not, certainly, as a procuring cause of salvation, but as an evidence of his being in that state, where alone salvation can reach him, viz. a state of union with his Saviour, as bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, bought with his blood, and adopted through him, as an heir of glory.

The soul that has loved God, while on earth, will love Him more intensely, when separated, by death, from all temptation to sin. While the soul that has been forgetful of God and unmindful of his offers of mercy, will be eternally excluded by death, from the possibility of reconciliation with Him. Be persuaded that death will work no miracle. As you live, so will you die, and so will it fare

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with you to all eternity. The bent of your disposition in life, will be strengthened and confirmed by death. The godly will be raised to higher degrees of sanctity, while the godless will be driven away from the divine presence, without the possibility of a return. The main tendencies and ruling desires of the soul follow it into the separate state; and there is no reason to suppose that absence from the body will immediately enlighten it with knowledge, which, while on earth, it never sought to acquire. We may even conceive that the doubts of the sceptic will not be altogether cleared up. The certainty of a prolonged existence, after death, he undoubtedly must have; but he will see God as little in the shades, as he sought to do upon the earth, where he suffered himself to be convinced, neither by the wonders of the Divine government, nor by the voice of conscience. In like manner, he may go on doubting of the glorious attributes of our Divine Redeemer, and of exclusive salvation

through his wounds ; because, it is faith only, that can lead us to see Him, and to receive his instruction. He may possibly continue in the same mind which he had during life, doubting as to all things, excepting his own existence, and that cheerless gloom which now surrounds him ; because there, he will have intercourse only with degraded souls of his own sort, and be totally excluded from the higher teaching which was his despised privilege while on earth. While here, he never looked to a more elevated source than nature, chance, or necessity ; and there, he will have no opportunity of doing so ; shut up in ignorance, impotence, and misery, with spirits as ignorant, impotent, and miserable as himself.

Let us picture to ourselves the state of a disembodied soul which, in this mortal life, was wholly carnal and sensual, but little removed in all sublimer qualities, above the beasts that perish. Such a one, while in the flesh, never felt true faith, or a lively desire after God, and a

firm persuasion of his method of salvation ; or deep self-abasement, conviction of sin, and consciousness of inability to amend, except by coming to the divine fountain of eternal life ; and thus, never made earnest and sincere attempts, however feeble, to approach that source of grace and truth. The desires and guilt of such a miserable being, after the body falls away, remain with the soul. Where, then, will be its comfort, or its enjoyment? Its passions and desires live, but there is no longer a body ; a sensual world no longer exists for it, wherein it may find gratification for them. Where the treasure is, there also is the heart. If a man has, in life, loved the world, and has therein, sought his treasure, the desire of his soul, must, even after death, still be bound there, and cannot get free. There will be an unsatisfied craving for the enjoyment of earthly things, which are for ever removed, while the enjoyment of higher happiness is forbidden, or even, were it granted, could not be received.

A violent craving, never to be satisfied, must be the sorrowful portion of that immortal, imperishable being, whose affections have, in his little day of trial, been wholly centered on that which is mortal and perishable. Of this, the heathens seem to have had a just idea, and the fabled Tantalus may preach an instructive lesson to the christian church.

In the pictures which I have ventured to draw, of the woeful contrast between the condition of souls in Hades, and that which they had enjoyed and abused in this life, I have purposely refrained from introducing to your notice, notorious sinners, scandalous reprobates : for that these must be punished, is a truth which gains the assent of every one. But we are not so ready to admit that respectable members of society, persons who have deserved well of their contemporaries, are to share this terrible fate, merely, because they have been thoughtless of God, and have made light of the offer of salvation by

Christ. And this making light, my brethren, is the common sin of all classes of men, and it is the only sin which they have in common. The old man despises the giddiness of the young, the man of business despises the frivolity of the man of pleasure, the man of learning despises the pursuits of the ignorant; and they again, are rewarded by similar feelings of contempt and dislike, from those whom they have but lightly esteemed. Yet widely different as they are, the one from the other, they agree in one thing, in despising the Gospel of Christ; and for this cause, Christ will be ashamed of them, and will not acknowledge them before his heavenly Father; and thus they will be thrown out from his presence for ever. And there is no alternative; exclusion from heaven is the same with imprisonment in hell. There is no midway, no convenient escape from God's wrath, for petty sinners. Therefore, weigh well your actions, curb your desires, bring them all into subjection to

the empire of Christ; and then his reign over you, which may have begun in clouds and difficulties on earth, shall be carried on with invincible power and boundless love, for ever, in the skies. But see that you beware of making light of the salvation, which is offered to you by Christ. Those who, as our Lord, in his parable, tells us, made light of it, are not accused of gross sin. They possessed what they thought extremely valid excuses; and their employments of important ordinary business, were such as, really, to call for much care and attention; and, within due bounds, would have been innocent and praiseworthy. Their sinfulness consisted, in their being unduly raised to a pre-eminence over the service of God. The love of this present world has been, and is, a stumblingblock to multitudes of professing Christians. Not that this world is not to be loved and cared for. But this must not be in competition with the kingdom of Christ. We are directed to sell all that we have, for the pearl of

great price; or, in other words, to renounce everything, however cherished, which is incompatible with his faithful service.

Ere many more years have passed, and when your souls are separated from your bodies, you will look upon this world, its events and its concerns, with very different feelings from those which you now experience. You will regard many things, which now seem desirable, as dangerous rocks and quicksands, among which you ran the risk of making shipwreck of your souls; and you will thank your heavenly Father for having often delivered you from ruin, by withdrawing from you, the golden goblet, which you had stretched forth your hand to grasp, because it contained a poisonous draught. While, on the other hand, the things which seemed most grievous to you, the mortifications which you considered too hard to bear, the bereavements by which your inmost souls were afflicted, the pains which made life a weariness to you, shall, then, all, be re-

garded in their true light, of messengers of mercy to your souls, gracious dispensations of God's providence, sent to guide you through things temporal, so as not finally to lose the things which are eternal.

Such, my brethren, may be supposed to be a part of the employment of the redeemed souls in paradise, and such, the train of their meditations upon the gracious dealings of God with them, during the commencement of their existence, in this land of probation. Regarding the past in the light of truth, no longer warped by prejudice, blinded by passion, or engrossed with the flesh, they may be said to behold God as He is, designing all his dispensations for the good of the souls of his people, and acting, as a loving Father, when He chastens, as well as when He crowns with joy. The soul, occupied with such divine meditations, must become more and more acquainted with the mind of the Almighty, and better and better fitted, to serve him actively hereafter, in

whatever way his glory may require. For, my brethren, we must not imagine that heaven is merely to be a place of rest. The happy saints who are admitted to surround the throne of God, shall indeed make the vaults of heaven to resound with their hallelujahs of praise, and shall indeed raise the sweet incense of prayer, on an eternal altar, to their Father and their God; but we may believe that their life will be one of busy activity, in ministering to the will of the Almighty, and labouring to promote his glory, in ways which the ignorance of our mortal nature is unable to conceive. And let it be impressed upon you, that our eternal condition is nothing more than the superlative degree of our temporal condition. If we love sin here, we shall be its wretched slaves for ever, and if we live away from God here, we shall be banished without recall, everlastingly, from his presence. While, if we love God, and strive to serve Him here, we shall love Him better and better,

and be enabled to serve Him undeviatingly, throughout eternity.

Our life that now is, is the mere threshold of existence ; it is the point of time, from whence you are to start, on your eternal course : but it is awfully important, inasmuch, as it will give a colour of blessedness or woe to that eternity. Where the summons of death finds you, eternity receives you. If you are found a disciple of Christ, your union with him will be increased throughout endless ages ; but if you are found thoughtless of Him, and careless of pleasing Him, you will be banished far away from Him for ever and ever. In the state in which you die, you will abide after death, only, the degree of your condition in that state will be rendered more intense. To those who fall asleep in Jesus, the sense of freedom from guilt, safety from sin, and abiding union with their Lord, will be heightened by the blessed prospect of a life of glory, in the presence of the Almighty, in the heaven of heavens, when the renewed and glori-

fied body shall be re-united to the beatified spirit, and the perfect man shall thus ascend, to minister in the holy of holies in the skies, and to present the pure offering of the prayer of saints to the Father of the universe. While, to those who leave this world without christian hope, a keen remorse for the past, and a sense of present wretchedness, will be aggravated by the prospect of eternal anguish, amid the flames of the unquenchable fire, and the torments of the never-dying worm.

A period will come, my brethren, when the destinies of this earth shall be completed. The appointed day will at length arrive, when the mighty angel from heaven, shall swear by Him that liveth for ever and ever, that "there shall be time no longer." (Rev. x. 6.) A time will come, when the consummation of all things shall be at hand. "Then, shall there be a great earthquake, and the sun shall become black, as sackcloth of hair, and the moon shall become as blood.

And the stars of heaven shall fall to the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind, and the heaven shall depart, as a scroll when it is rolled together, and every mountain and island shall be moved out of their places. Then shall the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hide themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains ; and shall say to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us, from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb ; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand ?” (Rev. vi.) Yes, my brethren, who shall be able to stand undismayed, before the Lord, on that great and terrible day ? Those and those only, who have been united to him as obedient children, in this their day of trial. “ Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this sinful generation, of him

also, shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with his holy angels." (Mark viii. 38.)

"Death and the shades shall give up the dead which are in them, and all shall stand before the judgment-seat of Christ." The dark spirits of the godless will then quit their prison-house, to enter upon a hopeless period of immortal agony, increased a thousand-fold, by their re-union with their bodies, once the fatal instruments of their errors and crimes, and now, prepared by Almighty justice, to be the terrible instruments of their *most* just and eternal punishment. With what feelings will they revisit this earth, in which they once were placed, each with his peculiar stewardship, to occupy until the Lord should come? How poignant will be their grief, when they behold once more, the scene of their trial, the scene of their fall, the scene of their crimes, or, it may be, the scene of their sluggish indifference to the service of God, and to the prosecution of their own highest

interests. They will then be taught the truth of a sentence of holy writ, which they never regarded. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." (Psalm ix. 17.) How bitter will be their regret, when they pass in review, all the events which occurred ages before, in places once so familiar! Each spot will mark a duty neglected, a trust perverted, a means of grace abused. How terrible will be their shame, and how deep their confusion, when they are brought, face to face, with those whom they had injured, neglected, abandoned, ruined, or destroyed! With what feelings will the murderer behold his blood-stained prey, standing before him, in awful accusation? How shall the seducer bear the voice of his victim, denouncing him as the spoiler of purity, the author of misery? What answer shall the extortioner or the unjust steward make, to the orphans whom he has oppressed, or the master whom he has plundered? But all these are but the beginning of sorrows to the

despairing of mercy, the fearful of condemnation. What answer shall they make to their Judge? The accusations of their fellow-mortals may be hard to bear, but what are they, in comparison with those of their miserable consciences, which tell them of black ingratitude to Him who loved them and died for them, and poured forth his blood for their sake? O, how frantic will be their cries to the "mountains and the rocks to fall on them, and hide them from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" (Rev. vi. 16.)

The spirits of the just will joyfully quit the blessed abodes of paradise, to mingle once more, with the multitudes on earth, that scene of their former struggle with sin, of christian warfare, and, thanks to Christ's mercy, of glorious victory. With what feelings will the happy soul, reunited with its body, renewed and glorified, revisit its ancient worldly abode!

The gracious designs of divine providence in its favour, will be traced amid the scenes of former existence, chequered often with the pains and trials, which are now found to have worked together for good. Every spot will recall some cause of humble and pious thankfulness to a heavenly Father, whose grace prevented prosperity from being a snare, and caused the blackest adversity to help the pilgrim onward to life everlasting. How happy will be the meeting in peace, in blessedness, on the very borders of triumph and glory, of those connexions and dear friends, whose earthly separation was amid clouds and darkness, gloom and despondency! No more care, no more sorrow, all tears, all suffering are terminated, the joys of heaven seem already begun. Yet, they are only on the threshold of immortality. The resurrection morning is the cheering dawn of a bright and cloudless day, to be spent in the heavenly presence. They are about to receive the gracious sentence of "Come,

ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (Matt. xxv. 34.) And when the scene of judgment is over, they shall be permitted to approach the tree of life, and to enter in through the gates of the city, of which "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple." The city, which has "no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof, and the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it:" the city, into "which there shall, in no wise, enter anything that defileth, but they that are written in the Lamb's book of life." (Rev. xxi.) Amen.

SERMON VII.

THE RETURN OF CHRIST.

ST. LUKE iv. 21.

“ And he began to say unto them ; This day, is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.”

“ THUS it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness,” were the memorable words of our Saviour, when He received the rite of baptism, previous to his solemn ordination by the Holy Ghost, for his public ministry.

This maxim formed the great rule of his life, and it is one of the most valuable of the precepts which, illustrated by his unvarying example, He has left to his

disciples. Though, uniting in his own person, the nature of the Godhead, with that of innocent and perfect humanity, He did not, on that account, omit the use of every means of grace, by which the divine blessing descends on man ; and He paid the most scrupulous attention to every institution of that Church, which, while He sojourned upon earth, was the accredited channel of intercourse between the Almighty and his creatures. This example might serve to correct mistakes, which occasionally obscure the piety of the devout, and deprive their worship of its catholic character. Enjoying, as they conceive, the full sweetness of spiritual communion, they sometimes esteem too lightly, the benefit of outward ordinances. Criticizing, as too minute, the attention to ceremonies which others display, and attaching the reproach of superstition, to a rigid adherence to external forms ; they profess to worship God as effectually, with the inward reverence of the heart, and in the retirement of the chamber,

as with the visible signs of lowly adoration, and in the public assembly. But this, which, except in cases of necessity, is a fatal mistake, which will destroy the growth, and endanger the very existence of real religion, would be avoided, were the example of our Saviour to be imitated ; who, although he enjoyed the illumination of the Godhead, which dwelt in his human nature, and required not the means of grace, which are so greatly needed by his creatures, was yet constant in every public office of devotion. For, while we know that He often visited the lonely recesses of the mountains, for the purpose of private prayer, we also know that He omitted not to worship God publicly in the temple, and to observe the rites enjoined by Moses.

And here, again, our Saviour's example may serve to correct certain gross mistakes, with regard to acts of worship. He not only used the means of grace, He also revered the ministers of religion, in their official character. The general

conduct of the priests and doctors of the law in our Saviour's time, shows that they were but blind leaders of the blind; and their persecution of Him exhibits them in a light of peculiar atrocity. Yet our Lord did not, on that account, refuse to allow them to offer up his sacrifices; nor did he attempt to influence the minds of the people against them. On the contrary, He enjoined on his disciples, "All, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do." We do not find that, disgusted with their formality, and offended by their hypocrisy, He refused to have any devotional intercourse with them, or declined to worship God through their instrumentality; ceasing to attend the temple services, and suffering no sacrifice to be offered for Him, by such worldly and profane hands as theirs. He did not, with his disciples, form a church apart, separating himself and them, from that which God had planted among the Hebrews. Nor did He deny the validity of that church's offices, because they

were performed by unholy and mercenary priests, among a godless and formal people. No, on the contrary, every action of his life showed that he considered it a duty to honour the duly constituted ecclesiastical authorities ; and though private esteem was impossible, he publicly respected their official character and station ; and neither himself countenanced, nor sanctioned in others, the setting up of a new mode of worship, opposed to the established order.

He gave a striking example of this scrupulous respect for the divinely-appointed priesthood and religious ordinances, in his ordination of the apostles, the primitive chief pastors of the christian church. When he first sent forth the Twelve, the commission with which he entrusted them was, to preach that the kingdom of God was at hand ; and to work miracles, in attestation of the truth of their words. But He gave them no power to rule. He neither said nor did anything, which could lead them to ima-

gine that any ecclesiastical authority was delegated to them. And the reason was, that the community of christian disciples was not then a church. The law of Moses was still binding, the priesthood of Aaron was as yet valid. It was not until our Lord's crucifixion, that these sacred institutions of antiquity were abolished, because all of them, in their nature and design, had reference to that event, and, when it was fulfilled, the types which had foreshadowed it, vanished. The light of the Sun of righteousness dispelled the twilight, which ushered in his rising. When Jesus exclaimed from the cross, "It is finished," the worship of the old law ceased to be binding, the temple services became unnecessary, and the priestly ministrations of the house of Aaron were ended. Until then, our Lord's disciples had been bound to conform to all the observances of the Mosaic ritual. But the ancient church, having been abolished by his death, it was the first act of his resurrection, to appoint the christian ministry,

by the breathing forth of the Holy Ghost, consecrating its chief pastors. This influence of the Spirit was not the sanctifying one, which they previously possessed ; nor was it the influence of miracles and wonders, which was afterwards conferred on them, in the most eminent degree, at the feast of Pentecost. It was an influence of the Holy Spirit, expressly vouchsafed to the christian ministry, and to it alone ; and which has continued with that ministry, in an uninterrupted succession, even unto this day. But this appointment was not in opposition to the house of Aaron ; it was a new dispensation, which should take its place.

In performance of a customary act of devotion, our Saviour, on the occasion to which the text refers, entered the synagogue of the town of Nazareth, which had been the scene of his youth and early manhood. The most essential part of the Jewish religion was sacrifice, in anticipation of the offering up of Christ, which was performed in the temple of Jerusalem

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cely, by priests of the family of Aaron; and thither the tribes were commanded to repair three times in the year, to observe the solemnities of the great feasts. But, in order that the people might not be destitute of constant means of grace and religious instruction, synagogues were everywhere established, in which prayers were offered up, according to a prescribed liturgy of great spirituality and beauty, and the books of the law and the prophets were read and expounded. And this fact is well worthy of attention, that, in the public acts of worship, which our blessed Saviour sanctioned by his presence and participation, the prayers were not extemporaneous, but were according to a set form. Each synagogue was governed by a council, over which presided a ruler; but his functions did not, in the least, interfere with those of the priest, whose place was the temple, and whose ministration was sacrifice. It was the ruler's duty, at each meeting of the synagogue, to select some person fitly quali-

fied, to read and to explain the divineword. And according to this mode of appointment, our blessed Saviour was frequently employed in the office of instruction.

It is said in the 14th and some following verses of the 4th chapter of St. Luke's gospel, that " Jesus returned in the power of the spirit unto Galilee, and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all. And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him, the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor ; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them

thine bound, to preach the year of the Lord. And he took, and he gave it again to them, and sat down; and then that were in the synagogues, looked upon him." The words of the text, "*And he said unto them, This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.*" The chapter from which our Saviour recited, wherein it is thus written, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; to bind up the broken hearted; to proclaim liberty to the captives; the opening of the prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the year of the Lord." Then said our Lord, "This day, is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."

The Second Person of the Trinity, in ancient times, inspired the prophet to make this most

declaration of his pity for sinners, and his willingness to relieve them. And the same sacred person declared in our Gospel, that he was actually come, in order to fulfil that which he had formerly promised. Let us compare the promise with the fulfilment, and mark their correspondence. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me." These words recall to mind another passage of Isaiah, which contains perhaps the most wonderful of all the prophecies concerning our Lord ; as, in it, both the mission and the incarnation of the Deity are distinctly showed forth. (Isaiah, chap. 48.) "Hearken unto me O Jacob, and Israel my called. I am he. I am the first ; I also am the last. Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens. And now the Lord God and his Spirit hath sent me." And chap. 49, "Listen, O isles, unto me, and hearken, ye people, from far, the Lord hath called me from the womb, from the

bowels of my mother, hath he made mention of my name." The Almighty Great First Cause, who, in these sublime words, declares unto mankind his future mission on the errand of salvation, and his future incarnation for purposes of mercy; does, in the prophecy contained in the 61st chap., which we are more particularly considering, allude to the threefold office, which he was to perform in the scheme of our redemption. For all three are implied by the heavenly unction, which he is said to receive, "The Lord hath anointed me." Therein, are the great offices of prophet, priest, and king implied; because all of these were bestowed with the ceremony of anointing. The descent of the Holy Ghost upon Christ at his baptism, supplied the place of this external unction, and consecrated him for the three offices which he has eminently filled,—of prophet, converting the world by his instructions; of priest, reconciling the world to God by his atoning sacrifice; and of king, reigning over the hearts of his people, vanquishing

his and their enemies, and yet about to reign and triumph gloriously upon this earth, once the scene of his prophetic ministry and priestly sacrifice.

“To preach the Gospel unto the meek.” The Gospel means good news. And to those who feel their extreme need of salvation, the Gospel, which announces it, is glad tidings, and to no others. Those who think not of the soul, and care not for salvation, can have no share in its benefit: while those, who expect to establish a title to salvation by their own merits, and trust solely to their own strength, must also be deprived of it, for Christ came to save repentant and reforming sinners, not the righteous in their own eyes. Christ came to preach the glad tidings of free salvation to the meek, the poor in spirit, the penitent, who know their danger, are aware of their guilt, and feel their misery. For, though the Gospel is proposed to all, it seems to be glad tidings only to a few, the convinced of sin, and the humble of heart.

“ He hath sent me to bind the broken-hearted.” To console, with the assurance of pardon, those who feel that they have no title to expect it, and who know that without it, their end must be hopeless misery. To console those, with a sense of heavenly blessings, who have been deprived by death or by misfortune, of objects of affection, which nothing earthly could replace. To console with the kindness of a heavenly friend, and with the prospect of unfading pleasures, those upon whom the friends of this world looked coldly, and for whom, the garland of earthly joys was withered. “To bind the broken-hearted,” is an apt figure, borrowed from surgeons binding up wounds, and is applied to the work of the soul’s great Physician.

“ To proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of prison to them that are bound.” Christ was sent to proclaim liberty to the slaves of Satan and captives of sin, and to give them effectual freedom from the chains of evil habit and the

assaults of strong temptation. But alas, there are too many, who would not esteem such freedom to be a blessing, and who regard the service of Satan as a bond too pleasingly conformed to their natures, to be willingly broken. To such persons, a voluntary bondage here, must be succeeded by chains of eternal torment.

“To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” This was in allusion to the solemn proclamation, by trumpet sound, of the great jubilee, which took place every fiftieth year, and when there was throughout Judea, a general release from all manner of debts, servitudes, and obligations. And this was a type of the freedom which Christ has purchased for us, with the price of his blood. He has paid for us that debt which must otherwise, have confined our souls in the eternal prison house. For it is only by what he has merited and performed in our stead, that we have the hope of salvation and rescue. Not all our sorrow for past sin, not all our attempts at reformation, could

have atoned for what we had done amiss, or could have saved us from future punishment ; any more than the grief of a debtor, and his attempts, with strict frugality, to avoid fresh debt, could suffice to pay the creditor that which is already owing. By the sacrifice of himself, Christ has paid the price of our souls. By the shedding of his own blood, he has set us free from eternal death, the wages due to our works of sin.

How striking was the scene, exhibited in the synagogue of Nazareth ! The Second Person of the ever-blessed Trinity, showing forth in himself, the accomplishment of a prediction, with which he had, many centuries before, inspired his servant the prophet. The Second Person of the ever-blessed Trinity, moved by a pity so tender, a love so boundless for the human race, that he condescended to quit, for a season, the realms of glory and to dwell upon the earth, in a fleshly tabernacle ! He, whose hand had laid the foundation of the earth, and whose right hand had spanned

the heavens, whose eye shot forth the splendor of glory on the top of Sinai, and who darted the lightnings among the cloudy masses, which enveloped the holy mountain, was now come, in lowly form, and in humble condition, to sojourn among men. He, who said, let there be light and let the dry land appear, and whose Almighty fiat was followed by the obedience of the elements, was now come, an unprotected wanderer, upon the earth; so desolate, that, while foxes had holes and the birds of air had nests, the Son of man had not where to lay his head. He who once led Israel with a high hand, through the miraculously-cloven sea, who nourished them for forty years, with heavenly food, and who guided them, by the light of his glory, through the pathless desert, was now come, to be scorned and rejected by the sons of his chosen people. He who, from amid clouds of unspeakable brightness, declared to Moses, "Thou canst not see my face, for there shall no man see me and live," now submitted to allow the

tears of human sympathy to trickle down his cheeks; nay, turned them to the smiters to be buffeted, and suffered his temples to be lacerated by a crown of thorns. He who was the Almighty Lord of the universe, humbled himself to be reviled and persecuted upon that world, where he should have been adored, and by the peculiar agency of that family of Israel, over whose fortunes he had so especially watched. To use the emphatic language of St. John, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." The men of Nazareth, who had listened to his exposition of the Scriptures, were, it is said, "filled with wrath when they heard those things. And they rose up and thrust him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill, whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong." (St. Luke iv.) But their blind rage was baffled by the power of divinity; "He, passing through the midst of them, went his way." Thus was Almighty love received by those on

whom it came, in order to confer unbounded and immortal benefits ; and thus was divine wisdom obeyed, when it descended from the skies, to instruct and to purify mankind.

Let us be warned by this miserable example ! Let us beware, lest we share in the guilt of the men of Nazareth, by thrusting from us the Saviour, in the very act of presenting unto us mercy and pardon ; and let us beware, lest we share in the guilt of his bloody and bigoted persecutors, proclaiming by our deeds, that we will not have him to reign over us, and crucifying him afresh by our sins. This is the hourly sin of the multitude. And in order ourselves, to incur it, we have only to follow the broad way, which is traversed by the majority of our fellow-creatures. We have only to live to please ourselves, we have only to forget God, we have only to indulge our own passions and humours, we have only to deny Christ, by refusing to bear his yoke of obedience, or to wear his livery, the garment clean and

white of his righteousness, and of sanctification through the Holy Spirit. And then, we may be assured that He will deny us at the great day of his glorious appearing. "For yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come and will not tarry." Hebrews x.) The day approaches in which Christ the prophet, Christ the priest, will again appear; but no longer in the character of the lowly man of sorrows, the sufferer, who bowed his head submissively on the cross, and poured out his soul unto death, for our transgressions. Listen to the sublime imagery, with which St. John describes the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour, on the day when he will revisit the earth as a victorious king. "His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns, and he was clothed in a vesture dipped in blood, and his name is called the word of God. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it, he should smite the nations. And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the

wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God ; and he hath on his vesture and on his thigh, a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords." (Revelations xix.) This magnificent description of our Saviour, when he comes again to execute justice upon the earth, singularly accords with the predictions of the evangelical prophet, whose book was read by our Lord, in the synagogue of Nazareth.

As the remainder of this discourse naturally turns upon the second part of that verse of Isaiah, which is referred to in the text, that portion of the Scripture which our Lord omitted ; and to the reason why we may suppose he so suddenly interrupted the verse which He was reading ; we will proceed to an examination of it, dwelling for a moment, by way of introduction, on another passage of Isaiah's prophecy, which has manifest reference to the same subject. This is the 63rd chapter of Isaiah's prophecy verses 1—3. " Who is this that cometh from Edom, with died

garments from Bozrah, this, that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments, like him that treadeth in the wine-vat? I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment." The object of this prophecy is to describe the triumphant return of the glorified Saviour to this world, once the scene of his sufferings; and to disclose in all its terrors, the day of vengeance, wherein the opposers of the true religion, the enemies of piety and virtue, shall meet their due reward. The believing servants of our Lord are represented as forming a chorus, in honour of the conquering Messiah, when He returns from the slaughter of his enemies, to establish his righteous reign. They join in a note of triumph, as

they see the conqueror returning from the slaughter of Edom, God's enemies, with his garments dyed from the vintage of divine wrath. The Messiah replies to them, by a vivid description of the pouring forth of the torrent of Omnipotent vengeance against the enemies of the Most High, and the opposers of true religion.

And when we cast our eyes over the earth, we see opposition to the yoke of Christ, not only among those who deny his name, but among those who profess to honour him, and whose systems of religion are founded upon his word and doctrine. Taking no account of the nations of heathenism, let us enquire what is the religion of the most civilized portion of the earth, and of the people that name the name of Christ? Has the prayer of the author and finisher of our faith been fulfilled; and is not the obstinacy and ungodliness of the world the cause of its non-fulfilment? "Holy Father, keep, through thine own name, those whom thou hast

given me, that they may be one, as we are" (St. John xvii. 11.) The prayer of Christ for the unity of his church, was not confined to his immediate followers, but extended to all time. And are we one, my brethren, even as the Father and the Son are one? Do we all speak the same thing, as the apostles enjoined; and are there no divisions among us, as they deprecated? Want of unity in the church is the effect and cause of sin. It proceeds from a spirit of irreverence, innovation, and unkindness; and it engenders discord, hatred, and false doctrine. This is a state of things which cannot exist under the reign of Christ, when he comes again, and it is one which must be destroyed by his advent.

Into how many great divisions is not Christendom parted off—the Romanist, the Greek, and the Anglican; without mentioning sect upon sect, perfectly innumerable, and most of them defective in form, in doctrine, or in both. The national and territorial apportionments of the

world naturally occasion ecclesiastical divisions, but they ought not to separate one and the same church, and to disjoin one and the same body. But we have not only separation and disjunction, we have anathema and malediction. And in the midst of this conflict of jarring creeds and forms, is there among us a humble, mourning, and prayerful spirit? Do we again and again, besiege the portals of heaven's mercy, for union and concord, in order that we, members of the Lord's body, may be one, even as Christ himself is one, with the Father and with the Spirit? Is not our frame of mind rather one of indifference to this mournful state of separation, to this dismemberment of Christ? Do we not think lightly of schism? Are we not so much accustomed to see it multiplied around us, that we think it matters not, to add one more, to the innumerable sects who bless not each other, but whose spirit is one of strife and cursing? We are apt, it is true, to flatter ourselves with a false notion of unity.

Some of our popular preachers strive to gloss over the fatal prevalence of disunion, by telling us that an agreement in certain doctrines, constitutes an united church. But in order to fulfil Christ's prayer, we want a union in fact, not in some principles only. We want such an union as *that* which subsisted among our Lord's apostles, and continued in the early undivided church; when those who separated themselves from the fellowship of the apostles and the primitive bishops, were cut off as excommunicated, and ceased to be of the number of Christ's people. Why are we Greeks, or Romans, or Anglicans; or why are we Christians of Abyssinia or of Chaldæa, cut off for ancient heresy; or why are we Christians professing the doctrines of Calvin or of Luther, but rejecting the church government of Titus and Timothy? Why are we separated from each other's communion; and why do we not all, form national branches of one harmonious whole? And why are we ourselves, of the British race, divided by such number-

less varieties of form and doctrine? Such a state of isolation and dismemberment cannot fail to grieve the spirit of Him who would have all his disciples one, even as He and the Father are one; and it cannot stand in his presence, when he comes again, in order to reign over his people.

Is it too much to hope, that we, of the British race and of the Anglican branch of the Church, have the blessed task allotted to us, of leading many people to uniformity of faith and communion? A privilege which seems pointed out to us as our own, by the peculiarity of our position and political relations. Holding, as we believe, the middle way between the destructive extremes of Popery and Puritanism, may not we be peculiarly instrumental, in preserving and spreading the faith and the forms which were once delivered to the saints? Is it too golden an anticipation, to look forward to the time, when we may become a centre of spiritual unity, conveying from pole to pole, and from the most distant east to

the farthest west, the blessings at once, of apostolical doctrine and apostolical government? We have been asleep in times past. But a spirit is rising in our Church and nation, which will, ere long, bring forth mighty efforts. If the destinies of the earth are to be prolonged much further, our immense and distant colonies must become the parents of mighty states and empires. And if we are true to our duty and to our interests, in supplying these with the full development of our ecclesiastical system, the discipline as well as the doctrine of the apostles; the time will come, when the Anglo-Catholic, shall be the world-embracing branch of the Church of Christ.

We may venture to hope that the revival among ourselves, of a spirit of true catholic zeal, unmixed with sectarian narrowness, will again win within our pale, the stray sheep who have, in ages past, departed from us. Such of them as are embued with a humble christian spirit, will approach our gates and sue for re-

admission: while the religion of those who continue hardened against us, will more and more, assume a worldly and unchristian character. We may entertain similar hopes with regard to the continental nations. The Protestants of Germany and the north,* will, ere long, renounce the errors of their imperfect discipline, and, by a great movement, advance to our catholicity, bending joyfully under the apostolical yoke. While the Greeks and Orientals, purified, perhaps through our instrumentality, from errors both doctrinal and practical, will seek to strengthen themselves by a closer alliance with our communion. And even among the Romanists on the continent, many, who now have no means of abandoning error, without, at the same time, abandoning much truth, may be led to renounce the novelties of their communion, for a purer faith, when that is brought before

* Among the Protestants of the North here alluded to, the Swedish Church is not included, which is already under an apostolical government.

their eyes, under the teaching of a real branch of the Church. Is it a consummation too great to hope for, that if another century of probation should be allotted to this world, it will see flourishing churches, governed by bishops, in numberless remote colonies, whose existence is yet future, and in islands of the most distant seas, now peopled by untamed savages? And, in like manner, that another century will see the Protestant communions placed under bishops; the Greeks and Orientals interchanging with us the pledges of ecclesiastical harmony; and many Romanists, converted to a purer faith, and preserving the forms of primitive antiquity, delivered from the yoke of usurpation and tyranny?

The developement of the antagonist principles of truth and error may henceforth, be expected to proceed with increased rapidity. The world is in a state of excitement, in all its varied phases; and in nothing, is the difference between the present and the past more striking,

than in the active and energetic character of the Church now, compared with the torpor which had benumbed her, during the last century. We may be assured that the enemy of mankind will exert himself to meet a glorious effort for the progress of truth, by a counter-effort for the maintenance of error. And while the real Church of Christ proceeds in her mighty course, enlightening the nations and converting the hearts of the people, she will be met by a hateful counterfeit, the Church of Anti-Christ, a heterogeneous assemblage, as yet undeveloped in its fullest extent, of apostacy, heresy, and schism, bound together under a dominant and despotic head, who will, though in vain, oppose her progress. There is every reason to believe that, at the time of the advent of our Lord, the earth will be the scene of the most deadly conflict between the powers of heaven and hell. Whatever of evil now exists, in false or erring communions, will be collected and banded together, in hostile array, against God's saints, who

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shall then have come out from the mass of his enemies, each one asserting, by deed as well as by word, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." It is our parts, my brethren, now, as faithful members of the Church of Christ, each one for himself, and for those over whom he possesses influence, to show by his conduct, that he is impressed with the necessity and importance of this resolution, and that he "is looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God."

When the Lord comes again upon this earth, it will be to establish his reign of righteousness; but that cannot be effected, in the midst of a corrupt and rebellious world. The nations of professing Christianity must, previously, have been turned to real religion of the heart, or else they shall have to drain, to its dregs, the cup of fury: the weeds must be extirpated, before the trees of righteousness can be put in proper order. And the Messiah uses the strongest expressions, to describe the vengeance, which he will pour forth

upon his unrepenting foes. Similar language conveys the same terrible warning, in the fourteenth chapter of the Book of Revelation, "The angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of Almighty God ; and the wine-press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the wine-press, even unto the horses' bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs."

Such is the omnipotence ascribed to the Messiah, when he shall revisit the earth, and such is the dreadful vengeance which he will then inflict upon the enemies of his people, the contemners of his doctrine, and the breakers of his laws. And let not our thoughts upon these things be so lost to us, as that we should regard them merely, as some curious particulars of the world's future history, in which we need take only a remote and languid interest. We know not when these things may be. And we may be assured that

we shall all be called on, to take a busy share in the last grand closing scene of the world. Christ declares that his coming shall be awfully sudden. While the world is full of wicked activity, and thoughtless indolence, while men are pursuing their own interests, and following their own devices; while the turbulent people are breathing forth revolution or war, and statesmen and diplomatists are negotiating peace; while the mass of mankind are careless of God, and mindful only of self, the Almighty is maturing his purposes of judgment. Suddenly, as the blaze of lightning, unlooked for, as the stealthy approach of the midnight thief, a voice, like ten thousand thunders, shall burst upon the ears of the earth's inhabitants. It is the voice of the archangel, it is the trump of God, it is the descent of Christ, who cometh to judge the world! If our bodies, my brethren, shall have returned to the dust, before that dread hour, think not that the depth of the tomb shall hide us from his all-searching

eye. If his fearful vengeance is first made to fall upon his living enemies, those who are dead, must also be called on, to pay the heavy reckoning of sins committed in ages past. For the time shall then have come, for the graves to hear the voice of omnipotence, and then, "shall those that sleep in the dust of the earth awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." (Dan. chap. xii.)

Remarks on these passages of scripture will not appear out of place, when we consider that they tend to illustrate the meaning of that portion of the word of God, which formed our blessed Saviour's text, in the synagogue of Nazareth, but which he, on that occasion, abruptly terminated. And if we examine the passage, and the circumstances of our Lord's discourse, we shall find that his studied omission preached more eloquently than the completed text could have done. The words with which, in ancient times, the Lord had inspired his prophet were these :
"The Lord hath anointed me to preach

the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God." (Isaiah lxi. 2.) But we are told by St. Luke, in the words of our text, that after the Saviour had repeated the words, "*The Lord hath anointed me to preach the acceptable year of the Lord,*" he closed the book, and began to say unto them, this day, is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." Now the question very naturally suggests itself to us, why did our Saviour stop so suddenly, in the middle of a sentence? Why did he not finish it, by continuing to read, "*and the day of vengeance of our God;*" "To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God?" The reason for his thus abruptly stopping, was, that if he had finished the sentence, he could not have said, "*This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.*" For the first half only, was then fulfilled. Jesus Christ had come, to set at liberty the prisoners of Satan, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord; he had come, with a voice of tender persuasion to invite all that would, to enter

his ark of safety ; he had come, to execute his Almighty purposes of mercy and salvation ; and by his advent, he was then fulfilling all that portion of the prophecy which he read. And then, he closed the book, because the latter portion of the sentence, which he did not read, expressed that which was not then fulfilled. For the Lord had inspired Isaiah with prophetic vision, which extended far beyond the first coming of our Saviour ; and He had commissioned him to declare the events, as yet unfulfilled, of a time still future, even of the latter days. It is only the first part of the sentence, which is, even now, accomplished ; the acceptable year of the Lord is still preached, the day of grace is yet extended, Christ yet knocks at the door of your hearts. He still invites you, without money and without price, to buy the waters of everlasting life.

But the second, the unfulfilled portion of the sentence, which holds out, in all its terrors, the day of the vengeance of our God, is still impending over us. There-

fore, let us kiss the Son, lest he be angry ; let us trim our lamps and gird our loins, that we may be ready, with joy, to go forth to meet Christ, when he shall come again, as the bridegroom of our souls ; instead of being dragged, as victims of our unbelief, carelessness, and hardness of heart, to be trampled in the wine-press of his fierce indignation. And let no one flatter himself with the thought, that these terrible denunciations apply only to those, who shall be found by our Lord, when he revisits this world, arrayed in hostile opposition to him. As we have lived, so shall we stand, on the day of the great muster of the quick and the dead, before the Son of man. And the threatenings uttered by the voice of inspiration, equally affect those, who have been mouldering in the grave for ages, with those, who are to be among the quick, at the Lord's second advent. As Christ came, the first time, in mercy, to save us, so will he come again, to establish his reign of righteousness and exalt his servants ;

while, at the same time, he will exercise the most awful vengeance upon his enemies. And this word enemy includes a numerous class, besides the scandalously wicked : "The wicked," it is said, "shall be turned into hell," and not they alone, but a much more numerous body, "all the nations that forget God." (Psalm ix. 17.)

And let each one of us inquire, whether there may not be too good reason for this denunciation to sound fearfully in our ears ? Have not we often been guilty of forgetting God ; or, do not we, even habitually, forget Him ? Have not we lived for ourselves, and not for Him ? Have not we loved this present world, rather than that, which, though now unseen to mortal eye, is revealed, as about to receive us, ere long, and which must endure throughout eternity ? Remember that the present is the accepted time ; now is the day of salvation. The acceptable year of the Lord is proclaimed to us, as the glad tidings of the Saviour's

first advent. And if we do not now, lay all our sins at the foot of his cross : if we do not now, receive, as a badge of safety, a garment washed in his blood, the day of the vengeance of our God must come upon us, at his second advent, with all the horrors of destruction. Those only shall be able to abide Christ's coming in power and great glory, as a victorious King, who have applied to Him as their atoning High Priest, and have obtained a share in his sacrifice ; who have obeyed his voice, as that of their Prophet and Teacher, and, in naming his holy name, have departed from all wilful sin.

When our Lord and Saviour comes to triumph and to judge mankind, on this very earth, once, the scene of his agony and woe, would you go forth with joy to meet Him? Remember, that then, He will consume with his wrath, those who have not, in this their day of trial, obtained an interest in his cross. Remember, that then, He will blast with vengeance, those who have not become subjects of his reign of

righteousness. Let us know ourselves. Let us measure ourselves by the standard of God's law. Do we sincerely strive to please Him? Do we hate sin, and struggle against it? Do we follow after holiness, and is it the desire of our hearts, to become daily more conformed to the image of Christ; or, in other words, to be daily more active and faithful as christian disciples? If so, we may look forward to the coming of our Lord, with joy, as to the approach of the guardian, the guide, the friend of our souls. But if we be careless pleasers of self, and seekers of this world's good things only, we have reason to tremble; for, with natures thus earthly and sordid, we shall never be able to stand the test of the fiery trial, to which the world shall be exposed, on the day of the vengeance of our God. On that day, (and we know not how soon it may arrive,) may our Lord Jesus Christ, (who cometh suddenly, as a thief in the night) find us waiting for Him, and rejoicing at his appearing in power and

great glory, to triumph with his saints, and to confound his sinful adversaries and careless aliens, with unspeakable, horrible ruin.

To every one of us, it shall one day be said, "Time shall be no longer." Death comes, and after death comes judgment. May the solemn impression which the words, death, judgment, and eternity, are calculated to produce on every reasonable mind, be made, by Divine grace, a motive to us, to flee from the wrath to come; and may they excite in us, a strong desire to cling to the salvation which is now offered unto us, and which, alone, can save us from being consumed with terror, at the approach of the great and terrible day of the Lord. Let us represent to ourselves, the awful sublimity of the scene to which that day is to introduce us; and let us be assured, that the most vivid picture of our imagination shall be far outdone by the reality. The great God, who once screened his immortal glory within the veil of human flesh, and who

appeared on the earth, the work of his own hands, as a suffering man of sorrows, will again appear on the same earth, but invested with far other attributes. The terribly glorious Judge of the quick and the dead will be environed with all the bright splendour of the Godhead. He will still, indeed, be "one like unto the Son of man;" but his eyes will be searching as a flame of fire. His voice will be terrible as the sound of mighty waters, and his countenance will be glorious, as the Sun shining in his strength. (Revelation i.) In this awful Being, we shall still recognize the bearer of our nature, Him who wept at the grave of his friend; Him who mourned over his ungrateful countrymen; Him who interceded for his murderers. But his season of humiliation on earth, will now have been succeeded by a season of triumphant glory on the same earth. The season of mercy will then be converted into one of vengeance, against his enemies, while it will still remain, height-

ened by the visible presence of boundless power, to reassure his friends. Before his dazzling throne, shall be hurried the living multitudes, from the most distant lands, to receive from his lips, the awful sentence, which is to convert their mortal existence, thus cut short, into an immortality either of joy or of woe. And with these, will be mingled the countless thousands, whom the silent grave now holds captive; but whose mouldering bodies, restored to new life, and revisited by long departed spirits, shall be disgorged from the yawning sepulchres, and shall thus be brought, from the still and narrow prison-house, to the terribly busy animation of this last closing scene of the world.

The dead and the living, thus assembled, summoned by the archangel's trumpet, from the caverns of the earth, from the abyss of the sea, and from the four winds of heaven, shall be marshalled into two bands. Each one, without murmur or struggle, will take his appointed station,

on the right hand, or on the left of the Judge. Our own consciences will direct to the destined spot, and the certainty of the overruling of Omnipotence, will awe into silence, the shriek even of despair. Those, who have the witness of the Holy Spirit with their spirits, that they are the children of God, united to Christ, will assemble in the place of sons, while those, who too truly feel that they are joined to no living root, will congregate together, as chaff, ready to be swept away into everlasting burning. We know in which division of this assembled multitude we should wish to take our places. Remember, then, that repentance, living faith, holy love, and active obedience can alone prepare us for the great day of Christ's appearing. Let us, then, come to Him with godly sorrow, with an earnest desire to be saved by Him, and with devout willingness to be entirely conformed to Him, and He will not send us unreconciled, or empty away. When, seated on his judgment-throne, He sees

us standing before Him, to receive our sentence, He will remember that we are of the number of those for whom He died, and for whom He interceded ; and as soon as the solemn scene of judgment is past, He will admit us into that happy world, where " The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed us, and shall lead us unto living fountains of waters. And God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes."—Amen.

THE END.

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